





THOUGHTS,

CHIEFLY ON

SERIOUS SUBJECTS.

BY

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Cogitatione omnis est abjiciendus dolor.

Cyeter :

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A good many repetitions will be found in the following pages. If, however, a thought is interesting in itself (and the recurrence of it affords some proof that it is) it may be made still more so by being placed in different points of view, or conveyed in different modes of expression, and when so represented, may be more likely to gain the attention of the reader. That these will have any readers, can indeed only be inferred from the interest they created in the mind, and which suggested the expression of them by the pen of the writer; an interest however which, obvious as many of them are, and fanciful as some may be thought, he believes the subjects of them at least will, generally, raise also in the minds of those who have feelings to move, and thoughts to excite.

“ Why not indulge such thoughts, as swell our hearts
With fuller admiration of that Power
Who gives our hearts with such high thoughts to swell ?”

— (*Night Thoughts, Night 9.*)

The reader is requested to turn to the Appendix at the end of the Book, for what regards the first Number, as well indeed as all the rest.

ERRATA.—Page 2, line 7 of the note, for “truth,” read “proof.”—Page 34, line 15 of the note, for “(see No. 129)” read “(see note to No. 38.)”—Page 37, line 1 of the note, for “absurdam,” read “absurdum.”—Page 40, line 8 of the note, for “summon,” read “summons.”—Page 47, line 12 of the note, for “74,” read “73.”—Page 64, line 1, for “veracity,” read “variety.”—Page 66, line 17, for “suppositious,” read “supposititious.”—Page 114, line 3 of the note, after “dust,” a note of admiration.—Page 160, line 4, for “we,” read “they”—Page 162, line 24 of the note, for “answerable” read “unanswerable.”—Page 168, line 9 of the note, for “sample,” read “jumble.”—Page 187, line 2, close the parenthesis at “page 178”—Page 197, line 16, to “accumulation” subjoin (as a note) “for more of this, see page 222.”—Page 203, line 7, for “and,” read “or.”—Page 207, line 9 of the note, dele the comma after “crowns.”—Page 222, line 6, after “no,” read “two.”—Ditto, line 7, after “each,” read “other.”—Page 231, line 7, for “though,” read “as.”—Page 253, line 1 of the note, for “No. 130,” read “No. 131.”—Page 254, line 9, for “No. 70,” read “No. 73.”—Page 258, end of line 9, for “the” read “its.”—Page 267, line 15, for “meritricious,” read “meretricious.”—Page 279, line 5, after “purposes,” for a note of interrogation, a full stop.—Page 280, line 3 of the note, for “Rosseau’s,” read “Rousseau’s.”—Page 286, line 10, after “superstition,” instead of a note of interrogation, a note of admiration.



THOUGHTS, &c.

I.

SURELY, surely, there is a God who governs this earth: and if this earth, the whole universe. Enough has been said of the impossibility that matter should be self-existent, or self-created, and of the absurdity of the substitution of necessity or chance, for a supreme and intelligent Cause, distinct from and independent of all that is subordinate to it. All these substitutions, and all the objections which the Atheist can bring against the existence of such a Being, only shew and result from an inability to conceive his nature; and this, instead

of being an objection, is rather an additional proof,* negative as it is, of his existence: for a little reflection on the nature and situation of man is sufficient to shew the incompatibility of such a power of conception with the infinite distance there must be between the creature and the Creator; between all that can fall within the evidence of our senses, and the Author of that all, and of all the mysteries insolvable by us, which it contains. A very little reflection on our powers and attainments is sufficient to shew how limited they are, and the strong reason there is from analogy† to

* It affords at least a foundation for other proof to be built upon, as is done in the reasoning which follows; and which, I apprehend, will acquire additional force from its being the strongest that can be urged on the subject, though indeed much more might be said upon it.

It may perhaps be said, that our inability to bring more positive truth must leave the matter in doubt: but what an accumulation of presumptive evidence there is to bring in answer to this? evidence that must decide the judgment in its favor. And if reason will fairly compare its own powers with the attainments to which those powers are adequate, it will know how to regulate its decisions.

† “Analogy, man’s surest guide below.”

(*Young’s Night Thoughts* – Night 6.)

believe that the degrees of knowledge and the chain of existence are carried much higher than ours reaches to. Where then does it end, but in a supreme intelligent Being?* and if supreme, then distinct from and no otherwise connected with all below him, than as the Creator of, and Ruler over all. A power in man to conceive the nature of such a Being, would, in a manner, raise his understanding to a level with the Divine mind: any further step towards such a comprehension, would be a nearer approach to the Deity, and yet would probably still leave an imperfection in that knowledge, which minds as captious and sceptical as that of the human Atheist might make a plea of, to call in question that existence and those

* All must be subordinate to the first cause: and does not our inability to define, or even to ascertain, abstractedly speaking, existence itself, prove that its origin is far beyond the reach of our knowledge.

The consciousness of our own existence is the only proof we have of the reality of it: from whence is that consciousness derived?

attributes, which the Atheist here disputes, because he cannot comprehend them, or cannot reconcile them with the result of his own limited and superficial observations and conclusions. But it is hardly possible to say what sort and degree of conviction some minds require; and the difficulty of impressing it upon them seems to indicate that the passions have a strong influence (and we cannot say how strong) upon the operations of the judgment. Indeed that they have is sufficiently evinced by the conduct of many men in the affairs of life. From the nature of man, there is an imperfection in all the knowledge he possesses or can acquire, and so great-an imperfection,* that of all that falls or can fall within his observation, his real comprehension may fairly be said to amount to nothing: what then

* How easily then he may be led into error, either by his own suggestions, or those of the society into which he may chance to fall!

must be his comprehension of things that are above the reach of his reason, that is above, far above, the reach of those senses from which his reason receives its information? As Pope says, "What can we reason, but from what we know?" But are we to suppose that all matter for knowledge is limited to the circle to which ours extends? It should rather seem, that, under a contrary supposition, we should remain in a total suspense respecting every thing beyond the bounds of that circle; but in the first place, we cannot tell exactly where those bounds are placed,* (and conse-

* For there are many things, of which we have imperfect ideas, but of the reality of which we may be not less strongly and reasonably persuaded: may not these be called approaches to knowledge? approaches that draw nearer to their objects, as our habits of contemplation and observation continue and increase. And if there is that general connection that is here supposed, it may well also be supposed that the different shades of intelligence touch upon each other, and that, as in sensible objects, a more or less imperfect light is thrown successively upon them. Is not our knowledge improved by dwelling upon the object of our contemplation, by comparing, abstracting, applying, &c.? What limits are we to assign to this?

The very sense and conviction of our ignorance (paradoxical as it may seem) may imply a degree of knowledge.

quently what degrees of knowledge we may be capable of acquiring); and secondly, we touch too nearly upon what lays beyond them; and the general chain of knowledge, infinite as the distance between its extremes is, is perhaps too much connected throughout to allow of a total separation and abstraction of any part of it from the rest.



II.

THE uncertainty of human knowledge, the consequent imperfection of language, and the obscurity and intricacy of many of the subjects on which men's understandings are exercised, afford room for sophistry, for scepticism, for variety of opinion, and at the same time excite us to that deeper and closer investigation, and that thorough exertion of all our faculties, that, accompanied with a *due* distrust of ourselves and of our first

impressions, will lead our reason and our feelings to the acknowledgment of truths that are beyond our comprehension, and to a reference to and reliance on that Power in whom the perfect comprehension of those truths must reside. They will lead us to the exertion of our reason as far as its sphere extends,* assisted and stimulated by those feelings which our reason avows, (and for what but this co-operation were those feelings given us?); and they will teach us to confine our conclusions within that sphere, to form them in due consistency with the faculties that are given to us, and to leave all beyond that to the Power who has given us those faculties for purposes they are fully sufficient to answer, when exercised in the manner that our reason and our consciences approve.

* And how glorious is that sphere, which has such a scope within it, and such a termination for its bounds!

III.

WHERE knowledge cannot reach, opinion must supply its place, and if we duly examine the grounds on which our opinions are formed, and the predisposition which more or less biasses them in almost every thing, and of course the most in matters of the most important and difficult nature, we shall, when we give our attention to it, find our opinions exactly suited, in degree and inclination,* to the most difficult and important of all, viz. Religion : important to all, difficult chiefly to those who wish for a satisfaction greater than the powers of the human mind enable it to attain. The due estimation then of those powers ought to determine the degree

* “ In degree and inclination :” that is, in the power we have to form our opinion, and in the direction we are disposed to give it when we fairly consult our reason.

of satisfaction that we may allow ourselves to expect.

IV.

WE are totally incompetent to measure science that surpasses ours : we can “reason but from what we know ;” all our knowledge, all our judgments, are merely relative and comparative ; what therefore is impossible to man, may well be possible to God.* But this does not necessitate, nor yet justify the “*credo quia impossibile est* ;” for there must be other grounds of belief ; and these grounds we are permitted, nay enjoined

* “Can man conceive beyond what God can do ?
Nothing, but quite impossible, is hard.
He summons into being, with like ease,
A whole creation, and a single grain.”
(*Night Thoughts—Night 9.*)

“‘I am,’ thy name ! existence, all thine own !
Creation’s nothing ; flatter’d much, if styl’d
‘The thin, the fleeting atmosphere of God.’”
(*Ibid.*)

to “search” and examine fairly. If we feel ourselves (on due consideration) authorised to say a thing is impossible, we are authorised also to disbelieve and reject it : belief is thereby precluded ; but a thing may appear to us to be impossible, because we cannot comprehend the possibility of it ;* as the compatibility of the prescience of God, with the free agency of man ; we cannot feel ourselves justified in disbelieving and rejecting this, or even doubting it : impossible, (or rather incomprehensible)

* Or can only resolve it into the unlimited power of the Almighty. If we presumptuously say that there are certain limits to his power (as, what has been done cannot be undone) we must consider that we cannot know the essential quality of things, so as to be enabled to draw any certain conclusions respecting them ; that essence is in him : and his power is bounded only by his exercise of it. As to our knowledge, it must necessarily be confined within the sphere of its own extent. How cautious, then, and diffident ought we to be in the use we make of it ! an obligation further demonstrated by the sense of ignorance which the utmost exertion of our faculties must end in ; that is, ignorance of every thing beyond what the purposes require for which those faculties were given to us. And it is especially in matters beyond the reach of our comprehension, that a well founded general conclusion ought (as is elsewhere, No. 13, observed) to preclude all reasonings upon particulars.

as it may appear to us, the reasons for our believing it far outweigh those that may incline us to reject it. If we believe the prescience of God, and deny the free agency of *man*, we must deny *his* responsibility also ; if we believe the free agency of man, and deny the prescience of *God*, we must deny *his* omniscience also : in the first case we make God the immediate author and cause of evil ; in the second we deny him to be the author or cause of any thing whatever.

If power is limited, it must be by a power superior to it. Infinite Power, as well as infinite knowledge, is therefore a necessary attribute of the Supreme. Lucretius's "*Rerum Natura*" is an effect without a cause.

V.

SOMETHING must be self-existent: if matter, then matter is eternal, which is an attribute of the Deity. Thus we fall into the absurdities of Spinosism, which its author perhaps thought to correct by uniting the Deity and matter, an idea probably founded on a poor analogy with the human frame. But, after all, what is matter? for we can only define it as it affects our senses, and appears to us—extension, hardness, &c.; but when we attempt to define it metaphysically, we seem to fall into contradictions: it is infinitely divisible we say: infinitude is another attribute of the Deity: is not this an approach at least towards Spinosism? But to pursue this infinite divisibility, does it not lead us at last to the

mathematical point,* which is a negation of all matter? an entity made (if I may say so) out of a nonentity? This kind of reasoning perhaps has made some philo-

* Does not the mathematical point, which may be considered as the extreme of concentration, shew that there must be a term to comminution, to divisibility? The argument in favor of infinite divisibility indeed, is founded upon our inability to conceive any particle, however small, which may not be divided into parts; but does this inability prove the fact? if it does, here are two arguments that appear to militate against each other. As to the mathematical proof (or demonstration) in the two approaching lines, they are (partly at least) nonentities, having only extension without breadth; therefore a metaphysical argument seems here to be applied to a physical case. Is not this incongruous? How is a perfect non-entity to be supposed? But—what is existence?

In our search after the absolute truth of things, we get into metaphysics, and there we are lost. However, there are metaphysical truths, of which we may be sensible. Such, I apprehend, are those of religion.

“And are there, then, Lorenzo, those, to whom

“Unseen and unexistent are the same?”

(*Night Thoughts, Night 3.*)

“We nothing know but what is marvellous ;

“Yet what is marvellous we can't believe !”

(*Ibid—Night 3.*)

There is no language (it is said) for metaphysics ; but metaphysical truths are not the less certain. Have we no ideas that will reach them? Yes ; to a certain point : for how otherwise are we to be sensible of that certitude? And if there are different degrees and shades of knowledge, why should not some of them extend to the confines of metaphysics? I believe the fact is, that our ideas of knowledge often require definition.

———“And art thou shocked at mysteries ?

The greatest thou!”—(*Night Thoughts, Night 7.*)

sophers (as Bishop Berkely, &c.) doubt of the real existence of matter; and of its self-existence, the doubt, or rather the rejection, appears to me reasonable enough. Its *relative* existence we must refer to the sole, self-existent, intelligent and supreme Cause of all; for intelligence here is surely to be supposed.— So Akenside finely says,

“Mind, mind alone, bear witness earth and heaven!
The living fountain in itself contains
Of beauteous and sublime!”

Akenside probably only meant the great superiority of mind to matter; but may not this idea be carried farther, and the mind be considered as the real source of every thing? an idea that seems strengthened by considering that all our knowledge flows from perception: and is it not absurd to make that perception a property of matter? From whence arise the imperfect ideas we have of many things? Is the perfection of those ideas to be found in the subtler part of

matter? In what degree of attenuation of matter are we to suppose the highest perfection of these ideas to exist, &c. &c.

VI.

SOME people seem to think that Scepticism is the best religion, or rather substitute for all religions, that the mind can adopt: but if we consider it fairly, I believe we shall find it a state in which it is impossible, or nearly so, for the mind to remain for any time: as it is in fact an abstinence from any decision, or even opinion whatever. A perpetual state of enquiry (*σκεπτομαῖ*) without any result being produced by it; which I believe is incompatible with the nature of the human mind, which cannot go on enquiring, without forming some opinion (whether it continues in it for any time or not) in favor of some system, either of its own, or others' forming, and

rejecting all others, or at least in preference to them ; it cannot remain long in a neutral state. As to religious opinions, it must adopt some one, or else one that is opposed to them all ; that is, Atheism : and even then, if it attempts to reduce its opinion into a system, it must adopt some substitute for a creative and governing Principle of the universe, which it will find, on due examination, to be a mere change of the name (chance, or necessity, or fate, instead of God) and not of the thing ; for it must assign powers to it, which are appropriate only to what it is meant to be a substitute for.

VII.

“ SHALL He, who made the eye, not see ?
Who made the ear, not hear ? ”

That is, the powers which God has bestowed upon his creatures, must necessarily be possessed by himself ; most

probably in a different mode, and certainly in an infinitely higher degree.—Our senses seem to be a sort of medium or vehicle for our knowledge. That they are capable of various degrees of perfection, and that to a degree we can hardly conceive—we see, in the powers of seeing, hearing, smelling, &c. of different animals.

We know probably much too little of matter, to be able to calculate the different modifications of which it is capable. What an extreme attenuation of it there must be in the particles of heat! what activity! &c. Are they subject to the law of gravitation in any degree? how nearly do they approach to a vacuum? if there is such a thing (or rather such a negation of every thing). If matter is infinitely divisible, what room is there for a vacuum?* &c.

* If matter is infinitely divisible, what are its first principles?

Final causes are perhaps all that we can perceive in the properties of these things, and that only in a very limited degree, but proportioned and suited to our powers and purposes.

What we call efficient causes, are only effects produced by other causes, (themselves also effects) which we can or cannot discover; for it is a chain of which it is impossible for us to measure the extent.*

VIII.

THE Epicureans seem to lose themselves in their ideas of the Divine nature.

* "Glasses (that revelation to the sight!)
Have they not led us in the deep disclose
Of fine-spun nature, exquisitely small,
And tho' demonstrated, still ill-conceived?
If then, on the reverse, the mind would mount
In magnitude, what mind can mount too far
To keep the balance and creation poise."

(*Night Thoughts—Night 9.*)

This is surely a fine, and, as far as we can judge on such a subject, a well-founded idea.

“*Nihil curat Deus*,” say they, supposing, that if he had any cares, they would affect him as they do us mortals. (But what an absurd notion !) Therefore, say the Epicureans, there can be no Providence. Then let us add, there can be no Deity. For what is power, wisdom, &c. without agency ? * The application of that agency to the affairs of man may be difficult to conceive (and therefore these philosophers, and perhaps Deists in general, take upon them to deny it); but if we do not admit it, we run into difficulties far greater and more complicated than that we would avoid, which indeed seems to present its own solution ; for if it appears to be beneath the majesty, power, and wisdom of the Deity, that he should concern himself with the affairs of so insignificant, and un-

* There certainly is an aptitude, at least, in Deism, to deny the agency of a Providence : Revelation therefore was necessary to assure us of it ; which Christianity does (in “ numbering even the hairs of our heads,”) in the most explicit and most impressive manner.

worthy a creature as man,* it is the more demonstrative of his mercy and benevolence, that he condescends to do it : and the last are as much his attributes as the first are. That this condescension is wonderful, was felt by the Psalmist (with whom every feeling reader must sympathise) when he exclaimed, "Lord, what is man, that thou carest for him, or the son of man, that thou regardest him?" That it was so, he knew, because he felt it : † for, as Lactantius says, "*Sapientia non in sermonis ornatu, sed in corde atque sensu est.*" Human pride may say other-

* "Mean though we are, not wholly so,
Since quickened by His breath." POPE.

If we are his creatures, we cannot be beneath his regard. Therefore, says Young, (*Night Thoughts, Night 6*)

"His nature no man can o'er-rate ; and none
Can under-rate his merit."

For without a sense of the dignity of our nature (in reference to its origin) and of its capacities, what stimulative can we have to improvement ?

† Will the philosopher say, that feeling is no proof of knowledge ? He may assure himself, however, that knowledge can have no influence on the mind, without feeling. Feeling may be said to be at once the spur and the bridle to reason.

wise ; but what is the tendency of pride, when not corrected by reason and feeling ? If there is a bias in us to self-love, and to the excess and abuse of it, how can it, when unchecked,* but infect and pervert our opinions ? How can it but generate self-conceit ?

“ Epicuri doctrina hæc est, imprimis nullam esse providentiam. Et idem Deos esse non abnuît, utrumque contra rationem ; nam si sunt Dei, est igitur providentia, aliter enim Deus intelligi non potest, cujus est propriam *providere*. Nihil (inquit) curat. Ergo non modo humana, sed ne cælestia quidem curat. Quomodo igitur, aut unde, esse illum affirmas ? exclusa enim providentia cu-

* And not properly directed. To quote Young again—

“ Man’s lawful pride includes humility.”

Therefore—

“ Take good heed ;

Nor there be modest, where thou should’st be proud.”

(*Same Night*.)

We are perhaps too apt to form our estimate of our nature, from the abuse we make of it : we see it as we make it ; and as the case generally stands, the balance (in a reflecting mind) will perhaps seldom be in favor of pride. Young’s poetry is wanted to animate us.

raque divina, consequens erit ut non esse omnino Deum diceres. - Nunc eum verbo reliquisti, re sustulisti." &c.

(LACTANTI *Epitome Div. Instit. Cap. 96.*)

IX.

To expect that we should see the immediate operations of Providence in the hand that conducts them, or that we should foresee the end of them, would be absurd in the extreme. That we cannot do this, therefore, so far from being an obstacle to our belief of the existence and agency of that Providence, is rather a negative proof in favour of it, our knowledge of it (imperfect as it is) being exactly suited to our state and condition ; and, the abstract reasoning on the necessity of a first intelligent Cause, to which all the chain of causes and effects (the general connection of which is in some measure apparent to our senses)

is subordinate to and dependent upon, subsists in its full force. To suppose an infinite chain of causes and effects self-derived, with an inherent power of action, but without intelligence, would be the highest absurdity; or to suppose the continuance of the general action (or whatever else we may chuse to call it) in consequence of an original fiat, while the supreme Cause remains in a state of absolute inactivity, would be nearly as absurd. It is the Epicureans and Horace's "*Deos didici securum agere ævum.*"* *Securum?* O man, short-sighted and presumptuous man, what comparisons dost thou draw! The first great Cause must act, if at all (and what is

* What does Horace mean by his "*Natura*?"—This "*Mira faciens.*"—Is Nature an agent? What then empowers, what excites her to action? Is she supreme?—Then a name should be given which will express (as far as a name can express) the only power that can be self-existent—"I am."

All power must be put in action by intelligence. If otherwise, what but confusion must be produced? and indeed what self-moving principle can there be in matter? What is to give the first impetus, and what is to continue it?

power without agency?) in some mode or other. The mode in which he acts (and which we, I may say, necessarily, see in its effects) we call a chain of natural causes.*

X.

THERE are some things perhaps of which our want of knowledge respecting them (paradoxical as it may seem) is no inconsiderable proof,† and the

* “ Say’st thou ‘ the course of nature governs all?’
The course of nature is the art of God.”

(*Night Thoughts*, *Night 9*.)

“ Nothing can satisfy, but what confounds;
Nothing, but what astonishes, is true.” (*Ibid.*)

And this must be instanced, in whatever attentive investigation we make of the works of nature—that is of nature’s God.

† For who (what reasonable man at least) can doubt the existence of a Supreme Being? but who can explain the nature of his existence? The same, when duly considered, may be said of the immortality of the soul.

There may be cases in which we can see a combination, either from actual observation of the fact, or from our sense of the necessity of it, without our being able (if I may say so) to *analyse* it.

The conviction of our ignorance of what we are unable

strongest that we can have, of the reality of their existence. And since ignorance is so essentially attached to our nature, is it not reasonable to expect that we should draw some positive benefit from a well-directed sense of it?

XI.

THE connection of morality with religion appears to be in no system so well maintained as in the Christian. Deism is in itself a mere speculative system, and offers no immediate motive or interest for the observance of the rules of morality, or for any reverence (at least such as will have an effectual influence upon conduct) for the Supreme Being. For the farther the reasoning

to attain a knowledge of (which extends to every object of our senses, when our enquiries respecting it are pushed beyond a certain point) must, I think, tend to make us set a proper value upon, and give a proper direction to, the knowledge that lies within our reach.

is carried, upon which this system is founded, the more we shall be inclined to reject the idea of any interference of the Deity with the concerns or conduct of men, as being infinitely below and unworthy of his attention.* A communication then from a higher source is necessary to persuade us of this. In all established religions this communication has been given or pretended to. It remains to be examined what system of religion has the best right to be credited for the reality of it ; and surely the decision will be in favour of the Christian. It may be said, that the ancients had a sense of the protection given to man by their gods : as instanced in Juvenal, “ *Carior est Divis Homo, quam sibi;*” but this is the language of feeling,†

* And if we admit an argument drawn from his goodness in opposition to this, it must surely operate in favour of Christianity : for there it has its full display.

And if we do not admit that argument, we leave him no attribute (if I may say so) but pride.

† It is curious to observe how feeling is sometimes at variance with argument : not, however, with argument

(and indeed of common sense.) Let us, however, see whether the philosophers (the Epicureans especially) held the same.

XII.

What has happened, was to happen; this perhaps may be ranked among the "primary truths," of which Dr. Oswald speaks in his very sensible work, "An appeal to common sense." It was probably the instinctive (if I may use that term) sense of this, that made the ancients suppose an authority which they called "*Fate*," the "*Book*" of which their Jupiter was obliged to refer to whenever he wanted to know the events that were to happen. The same idea (or much the same) seems to be enter-

supported by reason; indeed it is partial reasoning (as is elsewhere observed) that is productive of error; and the human mind is prone to both.

tained by those philosophers in modern times, who attribute the course of events in this world to *necessity*. The same internal conviction, that there is something which controuls and directs the free agency of man, and the difficulty of referring it to the will of a superior Being, consistently with man's exercise of his free agency, appears to make us often use the term *chance*, when we speak of what is to happen; though, indeed, it may rather spring from the consciousness of our not being able either to direct or foresee fortuitous events, nor to see any other direction of them: all, however, must be a chain of causes and effects. All these difficulties must arise from the nature and limits of our ideas and knowledge: we cannot conceive how one Being foresees and controuls the actions of another, leaving to him at the same time the freedom of choice and agency: and, apparently to elude the difficulty, we have recourse

to a mere nonentity, an abstraction from all being whatever ; not considering that in using the terms Fate, Necessity, or Chance, we still suppose an overruling agency, only changing the name of the agent. We cannot, therefore, help referring to some power that foresees and directs the course of events, and the consequence of human actions, independently of the will and knowledge of man. This power must reside in, and be exercised by, the Supreme Being.* Omniscient as he is, he must foresee our actions and their consequences : omnipotent as he is, he must direct them as he thinks fit. To suppose in him a knowledge of human actions, without

* For how infallibly must all this reasoning lead to a Supreme Intelligence !

These thoughts must, I think, force conviction on the mind ; but, as they require some stretch of attention, we may be apt at times to forget them, and to be influenced by far inferior considerations. Our *habits*, then, become objects of importance ; for they ought not to be matters of mere impulse, nor yet of inconsiderate imitation or compliance. We must judge for ourselves, and *weigh* before we judge ;—weigh, that we may be better able to do justice, both to others and to ourselves.

any participation in, or influence over them, would be an evident absurdity ; for to suppose that in the relation between God and man, between the Creator and his creature, there should be a possession of Almighty Power, with all the attributes accompanying it, but without any exercise of it or them, is surely the highest absurdity. Respecting the attributes of God, little as we can comprehend the manner in which they display themselves, or how they influence each other, we are equally bound to believe (for to deny it would be as absurd as it would be impious) in his possession of them, each in perfection, each inviolable, and all such as are necessary to constitute (if the word may be used) a perfect Being.

XIII.

“ SHALL Gravitation cease, as you pass by ?”

(*Pope's Essay on Man.*)

WE can speak no further of gravitation than as a natural law, ordained by the Author of nature : for the existence of a Supreme Cause, in the great chain of causes and effects, is a truth that impresses itself (besides the evidence of revealed religion) as forcibly on our minds, as any physical demonstration can do : and He who created the chain can do what he pleases with the links of it : He, who established the laws, can suspend their operation ; we cannot suppose that he would limit his own power in the exercise of it.* This general

* “What less than wonders from the Wonderful ;
 What less than miracles from God can flow ?
 Admit a God—that Mystery supreme !
 That Cause uncaus'd ! all other wonders cease ;
 Nothing is marvellous for Him to do :
 Deny Him—all is mystery besides.”

(*Night Thoughts—Night 7.*)

conclusion should surely supersede all reasoning from particulars. It would indeed be highly unreasonable and presumptuous in any individual to expect those laws to be suspended on his account: but let not a generally existing necessity be supposed to controul the power of the Supreme Being; like the Book of Fate, which Homer's Jupiter was obliged to consult, not to coincide with his prescience, but to supply the want of it. What we cannot comprehend, it is vain and foolish to attempt to bring within our comprehension: but our belief of what we cannot comprehend, may be founded on evidence that we can comprehend (sufficiently at least for the purpose), and cannot but assent to. Such are the truths of natural religion, and such are those of revealed, if fairly examined. Let us then submit, adore, and be silent.*

* "Not deeply to discern, not much to know,
Mankind was born to wonder and adore."
(*Night Thoughts—Night 9.*)

XIV.

SOME subjects (and none more than those which regard the moral world) are so obscure and complicated, that it is but very imperfectly that we can penetrate or analyse them, when we observe their results. We must, then, depend on the little knowledge that we have, in forming our conclusions upon them ; and this, with the assistance of the general

“ Who worship God, shall find him. Humble Love,
And not proud Reason, keeps the door of heaven ;
Love finds admission, where proud Science fails.”

(Ibid.)

“ The aspiring soul,
Ardent and tremulous, like flame, ascends ;
Zeal and humility, her wings to heaven.”

(Ibid—Night 6.)

“ Thou, whose all-providential eye surveys,
Whose hand directs, whose Spirit fills and warms
Creation, and holds empire far beyond !
Eternity’s inhabitant august !
Of two eternities amazing Lord !
Aid, while I rescue from the foe’s assault,
Thy glorious immortality in man ;
A theme for ever, and for all, of weight,
Of moment infinite ! but relish’d most
By those who love thee most, who most adore.”

(Ibid.)

knowledge we have, and the power of drawing conclusions, is sufficient for the purposes of most importance to us.*

WE say that "it has pleased God that such and such things should happen:" and what we thus say in a manner spontaneously, or as the result of our general acknowledgment of the omnipotence of the Supreme Being, may I think be referred to the action of common sense, as directing us, independently of any rea-

* On re-perusing what follows this, which, as well as the other contents of this book, was written as the idea suggested itself, and afterwards here transcribed, I cannot but perceive the want of clearness there is in the latter part of it: such however as it is, it shall stand, with the addition of this corrective observation, viz. that a general reference of all events to the will of God, must be a primary truth, on which all others depend, and from which they must flow.

How can we suppose any principles that are independent of, or prior to, the first and supreme Cause? or that do not make part of his nature.

The existence of evil is subservient to the ends of justice, and (I should think) essential to its exercise; for justice is shewn in discrimination.—(See No. 129.)

The fact, I believe, is, that we can see and know only in part, yet, so as to be convinced that the different parts of the great whole are essentially connected with each other; but how they combine to form that whole, or why it should be composed of such parts, (otherwise than as it is the will of God) we cannot discover.

soning on the fact, which might tend to raise doubts in our minds of the truth of it, from the difficulty, or rather impossibility, of our being able to explain in what manner it takes place, or how far it is reconcileable to other truths that we are obliged to admit. Whatever consequences may flow from truths that cannot reasonably be disputed, must also be received as truths.



XV.

WHAT we think, has often to be corrected by what we ought to think. I do not mean by this, that we should make a sacrifice of our reason ; but that our reason should examine whatever is before it, with a due sense of its own limited powers, and that the examination should not be a partial one. By observing this rule, if we are not always sure of making a right decision, we shall

at least be pretty sure of not making a wrong one : and many are the cases in which it is better to suspend our judgment, than to run the risque of making an improper use of it : Suspending our judgment is not suspending our opinion ; for I believe the human mind is so constituted, that it cannot help forming an opinion on whatever it adverts to. Banishing the subject from our thoughts, is a mere diversion of them ; but if we must form an opinion, we may prevent its being a decisive one.* When we are admonished to be cautious in forming our judgment, the admonition is given to all. The sources therefore from whence opinions are formed, (when there is any rationality) are common to all : though the modifications of them by our passions, interests, various degrees of intellect, &c. may be various.

* “ Guard well thy thoughts ;
Our thoughts are heard in Heaven.”
(*Night Thoughts.—Night 2.*)

In judging of things, especially things of importance, all the consequences which will follow from the conclusions we are inclined to draw, ought to be considered : if any of these are adverse to those conclusions (or I should rather say, exceptionable on other grounds) we ought at least to suspend our judgment.*

XVI.

“WHATEVER is, is right.”

And it must be so : for if we believe in the existence of a Supreme Being, we must attribute to him all the qualities that are essential to that supremacy. The folly of Atheism, or a denial of his existence, is sufficiently manifest ; and a denial or restriction of his power is little,

* This seems to be a sort of *argumentum ad absurdum* ; the conclusions we form cannot be right, if the consequences that follow them are wrong.

if at all, short of it: for he must be supreme in power, and that power must be universally and incessantly in action, whether through the medium (as it appears to us to be) of secondary causes, or not; for what we call secondary causes, are only effects produced by it: but how very limited are our ideas of agency, as indeed of every thing else.

XVII.

THERE are, I believe, few cases, if any, that are at all complicated, which the human mind is capable of examining with all their "bearings and dependencies." Partial therefore as our examinations must be, it behoves us to be cautious, and to a certain degree diffident, of our judgment of them, even after the most mature examination we can make.

XVIII.

WE can form no idea of the non-existence of Time, because it is necessary to the state of things in which we exist. But it seems to be merely an appendage to them, being measured by the periodical motions of the heavenly bodies,* and from the succession of events, &c. from whence our ideas of it flow. The manner in which the first are performed, and the habit which we

* "From old Eternity's mysterious orb
Was Time cut off, and cast beneath the skies :
The skies, which watch him in his new abode,
Measuring his motions by revolving spheres,
That horologe machinery divine."

"Time is dealt out by particles ; and each,
E'er mingled with the streaming sands of life,
By fate's inviolable oath is sworn,
Deep silence 'where eternity begins.'"

(*Night Thoughts—Night 2.*)

"And is it in the flight of three-score years,
To push eternity from human thought,
And smother souls immortal in the dust?"

(*Ibid, Night 1.*)

"From dust we disengage, or man mistakes,
And there, where least his judgment fears a flaw."

(*Ibid, Night 3.*)

have (perhaps derived from them) of dividing time into certain periods, in our historical records of them, seem also to denote an interrupted continuity (if I may say so) of existence. If all that constitutes it is subordinate, time must be so too : and another and higher state may (and we have reason to believe that it actually does) exist, from which time is excluded. When all is resolved into that state, time may be (as we are told it will be) no more. That the state of things to which time appears to be a necessary adjunct and appendage, is merely subordinate, we have the greatest reason to conclude.* Time then is not real, any more than (probably) other appendages to the state of things in

* Surely if we admit the existence and superiority of "mind," that is of supreme intelligence, of which creation is the result.

"Mind, mind alone, bear witness, earth and heav'n!
The living fountain in itself contains
Of beauteous and sublime!"

AKENSIDE.

"What wealth in intellect, that sov'reign pow'r!
Which sense and fancy summon to the bar."

(*Night Thoughts*, Night 6.)

which we exist : but we can form no idea of any other state, because we cannot divest our minds of those ideas which arise from that in which we exist, nor can we form any idea but what arises from them.

Time is a succession of events, i. e. of changes, to which what is eternal and immutable cannot be subject. Eternity has been described by the schoolmen as a “*punctum stans*,” which implies an exclusion of time. So the Supreme Being himself is described (in sublimer language) in the scriptures.

Time, as it elapses in the course of events, or in the interval between any two, has a certain duration : * but without those points of measurement, what would it be ? The same perhaps may be

* “Time the supreme !—Time is eternity,
Pregnant with all eternity can give ;
Pregnant with all that makes Archangels smile.
Who murders time, he crushes in the birth
A pow’r ethereal, only not ador’d.”

(*Night Thoughts—Night 2.*)

That is, while it remains for us to make use of, and when it is considered as a prelude to eternity.

said of space as measured by objects.—The history of the world is a succession of events. If time is dependent on (or produced by) the events and movements of the material world, to suppose it real, would, I think, be to suppose the latter independent, and perhaps infinite and eternal; for the existence of time (as I said before) only appears necessary as an appendage to them. This would lead to materialism, and probably to Spinosism.

But how little does language inform us of, when we examine it metaphysically, (or rather when we make it the vehicle of metaphysical investigation.)* Let us consider what we mean by, and

* Is there truth in metaphysics? Surely there is, however unattainable the knowledge of it is to us. We have however glimpses of these truths; and those glimpses are sufficient to convince us of the absurdity of making our physical knowledge any scale to measure the other by. We may judge too, I think, in some degree at least, how far analogy will assist us. Without that assistance, no ideas can be formed; and as far as analogy (real, not fancied) will reach, the ideas that we form may be considered as substantial.

what is the extent of the word real. I should think that we may say, that what is relative to us, must to us be real, as relating to our existence and its ends.— But the human mind appears to have a sort of insight into a reality of another kind; a power of abstracting the objects of its attention from their relation to us and our concerns: this is metaphysics, and of this our minds have an idea, a degree, perhaps, of knowledge, though very imperfect. For may we not say, that the power of discussion (limited as it is) implies a degree of knowledge? The power of abstraction in the mind seems to imply a distinction between what is abstracted, and what that is united to; and that the former is independent of the latter; which, on the contrary, appears to depend, for part at least of what constitutes its existence, on the former.* We cannot, indeed, make

* As being its quality.

this their abstraction in physical cases,* as in the hardness or softness of material substances, &c. nor can we abstract time from the succession of events which constitute it. In some cases we seem capable of forming a higher idea of what we abstract than we see realised ; as in poetry, painting, and music ; and in the moral qualities.

XIX.

WE can reason only from what we know ; our limited power of estimating the probability of future events does not enable us to conceive the power of bringing that estimation to a certain knowledge of them ; but any increase

* Because the very proofs of their existence are merely relative : (therefore there is nothing for us to abstract.) The difference here, I think, shews itself between the evidence of our senses and the suggestions of our moral feelings, assisted by the deductions of our reason. These must be the most certain, when properly applied to, as being the highest faculties possessed by man.

of power in judging of those probabilities, must be an approach towards a certain knowledge of them, which must be perfect in the Divine mind. Our inability to go any further than an estimation of probabilities, proceeds, then, from the imperfection of our mental faculties; as does also our inability to conceive a higher power, which, however, must exist, and perhaps gradually ascend to the highest; and the power of God in judging certainties, is the highest possible extension of the power of man in judging probabilities. It seems then not unreasonable to suppose, that the power of man in judging probabilities, has some analogy with the power of God in judging certainties; and that in the exercise of that power, man is said to have been created in the image (however faint) of God.

Will these arguments tend towards a solution of the difficulty of reconciling the prescience of God with the free agency of man?

XX.

BEFORE we give way to our doubts of any thing, we should examine well the reasons why we doubt of it; we are not perhaps enough aware that doubt is a kind of opposition; it implies an opinion formed, (for the mind cannot remain in total suspense) and it behoves us to examine the grounds upon which that opinion is formed. This will put us on a new field of comparative examination : examining well the grounds of our opinions, will I believe give us a sense of our incompetency to attain an absolute knowledge of any thing, and consequently will incline us to adopt that opinion, (for some opinion, as I said before, we must adopt, whatever its extent may be) which has, every thing considered, the best reasons in its favor ; and we shall not look for a degree of

satisfaction which, in our present state, it is impossible for us to obtain.*

XXI.

We cannot solve all the difficulties that occur in the moral dispensation of the world we live in ; but as we may be sure, from the soundest reasoning, that there is a Supreme Being, and as the scriptural doctrines, whatever objections we may make to them, are supported by evidence, both external and internal,

*The "doubt" here spoken of is (as may be seen) something more than suspense.

There are, perhaps, few things in which the mind acquiesces under a sense of total ignorance : it will find some analogy to assist the idea it attempts to form, the flight it takes in striving to raise itself to those heights to which its own feelings make it aspire. The capacity it has of forming imperfect ideas, must necessarily produce a wish and endeavour to render them more perfect. Imagination will be exerted to assist the reasoning power ; and imagination so employed, is (as is said in a note to No. 74) a mode (a shade) of reasoning.

The strongest and best-founded persuasion may require something more than the immediate conclusions of our reason to support it ; as including the admission of truths which are beyond our comprehension.

that fully evinces the truth of them; these, if properly considered, with the general conclusions to be drawn from them, and their application to the condition of mankind, will give that solution to all our difficulties, and that answer to every objection we can make, that must satisfy our reason, and make our acquiescence an indispensable obligation. Every difficulty cannot well be solved to us, unless things are brought within the reach of our understandings that are now beyond them. The objections must, I apprehend, be answered, and the acquiescence of our reason made obligatory, by the satisfaction given to the mind on the most material points. This the scriptures contain ample means of doing: in the investigation of them, indeed, our feelings are as much concerned as our reason, and perhaps still more; but we must take care neither to lose sight of, nor to abuse the latter.

XXII.

How many would be added to the list of believers in Christianity, if every one would lay down this rule for himself, not to suffer any previous notions or prejudices of his own to interfere with his fair and complete examination of the evidence in favor of the Christian doctrines! This is the principle that should regulate our determination, and substantiate a system of religious belief.—Mr. Hume seems to have felt the force of this, and in opposition to it to have advanced his absurd notion of a previous probability or improbability, which was to confirm or to preclude the authority of all evidence whatever. What right or power (sanctioned by reason) can we have to form that extensive and unbounded judgment of probability? But Mr. Hume miscalled it : instead of pro-

bability, he should have said possibility, for that is the principle on which he reasons.* Had he avowed it, the absurdity of his reasoning would have been more apparent.

XXIII.

A DISTINCTION is certainly to be made between probability and possibility ; and also a determination to what subjects, and in what manner, reasoning from each will apply : for the application may be either direct, or through the medium of other reasoning. It is proba-

* For what he considers as improbable, he decides upon as impossible : for so it must be, to justify an absolute exclusion of all belief. If a thing is possible, it surely admits of evidence that will make it probable. Till, however that evidence is given, it must be considered as merely possible. The admission of this may not imply reception, but it certainly is not consistent with rejection. In admitting the possibility of a thing, we should hold ourselves in suspense, and open to further information ; duly considering, at the same time, how far that information is likely to be obtained, what are the means of attainment, and how far that attainment is of importance.

ble that such or such an event will happen, because a similar event happened before under similar circumstances, and because it is agreeable to the common course of nature. But an event may be said to have happened, which has no such analogy or probability, the truth, however, of which is proved by evidence (and that of various kinds) sufficiently strong, when fairly examined, to overcome all the objections that can be made from the improbability (for impossible we can have no right to call it) imputed to it.

XXIV.

In the attention we are to pay to the evidences of the truth of Christianity, we are required to make use of our reason in judging of them, and we are addressed to as beings competent to form that judgment, and to “give a

reason for our faith." These evidences then are "the things that are seen," and are to vouch for "the things unseen," as to which, being beyond (far beyond) the reach of our comprehension, we are to be "as children,"* and (as it were) as "fools," that is, sensible of our entire incompetency to understand them, whatever notions we may be induced to form of the majesty† of the Supreme Being, as being incompatible with the communications given in the sacred writings, &c.

* In the ideas we form of the Christian dispensation, we are too apt to be influenced by those we entertain of the power of God, without considering his other attributes. These he must have, and these we must learn from the gospel. God is just and merciful; his justice is tempered with mercy, and his mercy does not trespass upon his justice.

† What is the respect that we pay to his majesty, when we limit his benevolence?

"O how Omnipotence
Is lost in love!" (*Night Thoughts—Night 4.*)

XXV.

A DUE attention to possibility and probability, and to the evidences on which the latter is founded (for the former admits of few* or none) will be of much use in guiding our belief as well of things beyond, as those that are within our comprehension.

XXVI.

IF the evidence in favor of Christianity greatly outweighs any objections that may be made against it, we must believe it to be true. To ascertain this, our examination of it must be a *fair one*,

* That is, when it is considered as mere possibility ; with further evidence it becomes probability. If this extension *cannot* be made, in what light are we to consider the Supreme Cause of all ? or how are we to admit his existence ?

XXVII.

OF the many benefits which the Christian Religion has conferred upon mankind, the principal is the assurance it gives of a future life, and the promise of a happy one, on the conditions it prescribes. The first of these is faith in its promises and doctrines. But is this faith arbitrarily required of us? No! our reason* and our feelings are both

Thus Young, (*Night Thoughts, Night 4*)—

“Reason re-baptis’d me when adult;
Weigh’d true, and false, in her impartial scale;
My heart became the convert of my head,
And made that choice, which once was but my fate.
On argument alone my faith is built.
Reason pursued is faith; and unpursued,
Where proof invites, ’tis reason then no more.

* * * * *

A Christian is the highest style of man;
And is there, who the blessed cross wipes off,
As a foul blot, from his dishonor’d brow?
If angels tremble, tis at such a sight:
The wretch they quit desponding of their charge;
More struck with grief or wonder who can tell?

* * * * *

Believe, and show the reason of a man;
Believe, and taste the pleasure of a God;

appealed to ; our reason in judging of the evidence by which the truth of those doctrines, and the origin from which they proceed, are attested ; and our feelings, in applying the promises, precepts, and doctrines of the scriptures, to all that concerns our satisfaction with ourselves, our ideas of moral excellence, our enjoyment of happiness here, and our hopes of far greater hereafter. Happiness, indeed, is so much our “being’s end and aim,” that I believe a real and steady desire of it is the best guide to it : that the more we desire it, the nearer we are likely to approach to it ; because there is something in our nature that will direct us ; that is, with

Believe, and look with triumph on the tomb :
Thro’ reason’s wounds alone thy faith can die.

* * * * *

Reason the root ; fair faith is but the flow’r :
The fading flow’r shall die ; but reason lives,
Immortal as her Father in the skies.

When faith is virtue, reason makes it so.

Wrong not the Christian—think not reason your’s ;

’Tis reason our great Master holds so dear ;

’Tis Reason’s voice obey’d, his glories crown ;

To give lost reason life, he pour’d his own.”

the assistance which has been given to us. This will be amply found in the Christian doctrines.

XXVIII.

WE may consider it as a certainty, that if the happiness of a future life is, to those who have merited or not forfeited it, such as it is represented in the scriptures, the authority of which, sufficient as it is in itself, is equally in accord with our reason and our feelings, when they are unperturbed and unvitiated, it will be far, we may say infinitely, more than a compensation for all the troubles and sufferings we may undergo in this life :* and regarded as such, it fully

* How sure we are, that referring every thing to the will of God is the best mode of explaining all events, good or bad, and the best consolation for the affliction which our misfortunes give us! and yet how difficult it often is to make that consolation adequate to the affliction we feel ! How necessary, therefore, to make that reference and

shews the value, the necessity of that patience, which is so much recommended and enjoined in the Scriptures, as accompanying and including all the exertions we can make to "do well." All the occupations and amusements of life are, I believe, only to be considered as diversions of our thoughts from preying upon themselves, unless they are pursued with that regard for the end of it, and for what is to follow, which is their proper direction. The use too, and necessity of patience in this life, independently of the scriptural recommendations of it, and the ultimate object for which they are given, must be felt by all who have experienced the trials of life,* and know what is required to

resignation fully adequate to its purpose, were the hopes that are given us, of a future compensation for what we suffer here! How perfectly consonant to all the ideas that our reason, "all sacred reason," (*Night Thoughts*, Night 4) can form, of the justice and the mercy of God!

Bristol Hotwells, March 7, 1821.

*—————"Levius fit patientia
Quicquid corrigere est nefas."

enable us to bear them : and this is another proof how much the scriptural precepts are calculated to answer the immediate purposes of our existence here, as well as what is to follow it hereafter. Here we are beset with cares and troubles ; “ *nunc vino tentas, nunc somno pellere curam; Frustra, nam premit atra comes sequiturque fugacem,*” is the frank confession of Horace, in making his servant Davus thus address him. And what is this “ *atra comes*” which we cannot drive away or fly from, but the sense of the want of happiness, and of the requisites for its enjoyment ? “ Wine and sleep” are but temporary reliefs ; the first, like other violent remedies, only makes the evil worse, when its intoxicating effect is over ; the second indeed, refreshes our spirits and our hopes, and makes us begin each day as it were with a new prospect ; but then itself requires, generally, some peace of mind to procure it. The best and most

permanent remedy must be a well regulated mind influenced by a sense of the duties which religion prescribes, and by faith in its doctrines and promises.*

XXIX.

How imperfect are the ties which Deism has upon the human mind, compared with those of Christianity! A Deist may reason himself into more than half an Atheist: can a Christian? But (says the Deist) I had rather be

* There is, no doubt, a prospect,
 "Which makes us rather bear the ills we have,
 Than fly to others that we know not of."

But there is also a prospect of a compensation for the ills we have. And what a compensation! "Eye hath not seen," &c.

This was wanting, that justice might be crowned with mercy: and this want has been amply supplied by the promises of the gospel. To obtain the benefit of them, what is required of us? Faith and good works—patience in well-doing.

"even the best must own,
 Patience and resignation are the pillars
 Of human peace on earth."

(*Night Thoughts, Night 8.*)

under the incertitude which necessarily attaches itself to human ignorance, than purchase security by the abandonment of opinion. Perhaps so : but will your feelings allow you to remain *quiet* in a state which you must acknowledge is exposed to so much danger.*

The Deist, however, would hardly make this acknowledgment ; probably concealing it equally from his neighbour and himself ; such is the force of human pride !

XXX.

It has been said, that it would be the greatest miracle of all, if the facts and doctrines of the Christian religion should be false : that is, we have the strongest reasons that we can have to believe them

* And what is this opinion that you will not abandon ? What, when fairly estimated ?

to be true. The more we examine them, the more we shall be convinced that it is impossible that they could be the result of mere human contrivance: to suppose them therefore to be false, is to make deception originate in a source far above our nature, and to be sanctioned by the highest power in the universe: a supposition equally impious and absurd.*

* "What most surprises in the sacred page,
Or full as strange, or stranger, must be true."
(*Night Thoughts—Night 7.*)

We certainly want something more than the mere suggestions of our own minds (which indeed would not occur without some previous information) to assure us of the truth of religion, and to make us feel the force of its precepts, and the comfort of its promises. Natural religion can only be considered as a basis for revealed. Let not therefore our prejudices preclude us from an examination of the latter, which, when fairly made, must end in conviction.

What, indeed, would be our sense of natural religion, if we had received no information or communication whatever? It is, then, by comparing what has been received, that we are enabled to select that which best deserves it.

XXXI.

THE ancient governments abounded in instances of cruelty, injustice, oppression, and immoralities of every kind. By degrees, nations have become more humanised, and, in our times, society may be said to have attained the highest pitch of urbanity ; and the administration of government is regulated by principles of justice and morality ; at least its operations are professedly directed to those ends, and in all public addresses and communications, are reconciled to, (or at least attempted to be so) and defended upon, those principles : and whenever they are swerved from, or in any degree violated, we may attribute it to the natural imperfection of humanity and its establishments,* varying in its

* Which imperfection may be expected to shew itself as well in the people who are governed, as in their governors.—

effects according to the various modes of government subsisting, but in all (in Europe) productive of much fewer evils than may be found in the history of the ancient governments. To what is this amelioration to be attributed? to the acquirement of knowledge? But the ancients were possessed of that in so great a degree, that they are considered as our masters. To the natural changes that have taken place among mankind? But these must have had their causes, and those powerful ones, whose effects have had a general and pervading influence. What can have had this influence but Christianity?

Let those who are dissatisfied with the effects which Christianity has produced, consider whether any other code could have been formed, better calculated to produce beneficial ones. If they think this has failed in its effect, to what will they ascribe it? Is it too good for us? Would they, by lowering it, lower the standard of rectitude? Are its doctrines too mysterious? What would they substitute in lieu of them? And under what authority?

XXXII.

THE veracity and tenacity of human opinions only seems to shew what strong proofs there must be to overcome prejudices; and perhaps there may be those which no proofs can overcome; for how much may our opinions depend upon our passions? * The present state of the Jews is a plain fulfilment of a prophecy, in an event which, however it may be accounted for by natural causes (and by what else are events to be produced?) is in itself unparalleled, and not, but by inspiration, to have been foreseen. The history of the Jews seems but to make a part of the insolvable mystery of human (under divine) agency and responsibility. In their present state,—

* Obstinacy may sometimes be the strong hold of ignorance.

"As unfulfill'd, th' endearing words they view,
And blind to truth, yet own their Prophets true."

(*Crabb's Borough*, page 54.)

And how can we expect the prejudices in which they are born and educated, to be overcome, but by means which will supersede all that influences the mind of man?

XXXIII.

REASON appears to be but a secondary agent in the human mind; it is generally subservient to its feelings or passions, to the bias which it has received from education, to its constitutional inclination, &c. Thus, as *Hudibras* says,

"A man convinced against his will,

"Is of the same opinion still."

And this may account for the obstinacy of infidelity in religion. *Rousseau* says, that "if he had even been an eye witness

of the miracles performed by our Saviour, they would not have convinced, but only confounded him.”—What sort of conviction did he want? If that arising from perfect comprehension, what is to guard us against Atheism? * Thus the Jews resisted all the evidence to which our Saviour appealed, in the works he did, &c. Neither these, nor the writings of Moses and the prophets, sufficed to convince them of his being the Christ, the promised Messiah. Their hearts were prepossessed and hardened; even the last confirmation of his Divinity in his resurrection, strengthened as it was by the very precautions taken by them to prevent any suppositious means

* Nothing that I know of; for if no solid reasons can be given (as certainly they cannot) in favor of Atheism, the force of those on the opposite side may be much weakened by our inability to comprehend them in their fullest extent; and thus an opening may be made for *doubt*. This deficiency must be supplied by our *feelings*: but how often are they themselves *defective* or perverted! But how strongly does all this shew the necessity of the Christian revelation. In that, the appeal both to reason (in what it can comprehend) and to feeling, is as strong as it can be made.

of procuring the belief of it, failed to convince them. Conviction, then, is dependent on the will, the predisposition, &c. The difficulty indeed of referring to its proper and primary source, seems to have given rise to Calvinism. We want the Divine grace to prevent, to assist, and confirm, and perhaps even to beget at first in us good dispositions; this, with the sense of the unlimited power and knowledge of the Almighty, with the exaggerated, partial, and exclusive interpretation of some texts of scripture, has made it to be imagined that the fate of individuals is determined by previous and irreversible decrees; which, if true, would leave no room either for the mercy of God, or the free agency, and consequently the responsibility, of man; and would (as Mr. Southey observes in his life of Wesley, vol. 1, page 361) “render the Gospel a mockery, and many of the texts in it mere delusions.”

XXXIV.

“IT is certain that men are capable of comprehending some truths, and of judging of evidence in some cases : why then should they not be competent, by the use of their natural faculties, to understand that Jesus was the promised Messiah ?” (Bishop Tomline’s *Refutation of Calvinism*, page 101.) Surely they are so competent : and it is to that competency (in the exercise of their reason) that our Saviour appeals, to judge of the truth of his mission from the evidence of it, in “the words that were spoken, the deeds that were done by him, and the fulfilment of the prophecies which were acknowledged by the Jews to relate to the Messiah that was to come, as the Redeemer of the world.” In the understanding of every thing that is contained in the scriptures,

we are to trust to the fair and proper use of our reason, for to that (with the dispositions that are consonant to it) they are addressed, and to the examination of them (as a test) it is fully equal. But this examination must not be a partial one; if we meet with a passage, the literal and unqualified interpretation of which would be contradictory to, or at variance with, other passages of equal authority, we are so to qualify it, as to reconcile the different passages to each other: if they did not admit of this being done, in a reasonable manner and with proper allowances being made, the authority of the scriptures themselves would be materially shaken by it, and the whole would be liable to be construed and perverted, as the passions, interests, or caprices of particular persons or sects might incline them: but there is nothing in the scriptures that is not, singly or collectively, perfectly agreeable to, if not always fully com-

prehensible by, our reason* and feelings: and there can be no reasonable hesitation between the alternatives of understanding some passages in the modified sense before mentioned, and the understanding them in such a manner, as that the reception of one must necessitate the rejection of the other.†

XXXV.

THE attempt to establish what is called by some "Rational Christianity" would,‡

* Certainly "agreeable" to our reason, if it is made a proper use of, and with a due sense of its own limitations.

† Which would have the consequence before mentioned respecting the scriptures; a consequence which needs the aid of no other argument to add to its force.

‡ And which appears to be the tendency of Unitarianism. But what must be the disposition of those who find, in the history of our Saviour, any thing less than the marks of Divinity? What, at least, must be their error—their blindness? Surely this is not the use, but the abuse, the perversion of reason.

The doctrine of the Unitarians seems to be an improvement upon (or rather an aggravation of) what Jack did in Swift's "Tale of a Tub." Jack (I quote from memory) stripped religion of its ornamental trappings: he left it naked indeed; but the Unitarians (ut "nequiores") have done something more.

if it succeeded, tend rather to destroy than promote the end proposed by it.— For if Christianity was reduced to the standard, and brought within the comprehension of reason, its divine origin, and consequently its sanctity, would no longer be allowed. It would be regarded as the mere work of reason, and perhaps human invention, and be liable to be changed as circumstances or caprice might dictate. Religion may, and does (the Christian especially) accord with the human feelings and interests, but its authority must be derived from a higher and better source than the mere dictates (mutable and erring as they are) of those feelings and interests.*

Reason, so far from rejecting what is above its comprehension, requires it in matters of religion, as coming from a power which is itself infinitely above its

* Our feelings are given us to receive impressions, and not to make them ; indeed the dictation of feeling implies an impression already made. Of what importance, then, is the source from which that impression is derived!

comprehension. It requires only to be satisfied of the truth of the doctrines of that religion by evidence which is itself within its comprehension, and, as far as it reaches, proves the truth of these communications which themselves relate to matters beyond the comprehension of human reason, and are therefore incapable of being demonstrated to it.— But to prepare our minds for this satisfaction, we must divest ourselves of those prejudices, which a little fair attention to the nature of our minds will convince us are treacherous, and therefore dangerous guides.

XXXVI.

IN the establishment and progress of a religion, human means must be resorted to, as the instrument, unless an immediate *miracle* is operated and continued: and even *that* must be in some

sort adapted to the condition of human nature; or else that nature must be totally changed. If human means are made the instruments, they must be in some measure adapted to the state of the times when the promulgation takes place. Either, then, we must regulate our ideas of a religion by what the conditions of human nature require and necessitate, or else we must consider mankind as totally unqualified for the reception of any religion at all that is founded in truth: and with this *general* disqualification, we must also consider ourselves *individually* as being capable of judging, and competent to receive or reject whatever religion is offered to us, according as our opinions or inclinations may lead us; and of substituting in its stead the mere suggestions of our own minds, without running any risque of deviating from or violating truth.*

* Such are the absurdities and inconsistencies that result from unfair examination.

XXXVII.

CHRISTIANITY may make a philosopher doubt, but it *will* make a reasonable man believe. Indeed I think there is no real medium between Christianity and Atheism: the former, when *fairly* examined, will be found supported by such a weight of evidence* that the rejection of it will leave no principles in the mind to substantiate any other system of religious belief. Deism, then, independently of some observations and reasonings that can have no firm hold on the

* "In his blest life
I see the path, and in his death the price,
And in his great ascent the proof supreme,
Of immortality. And did he rise?
Hear, O ye nations! hear it, O ye dead!
He rose! he rose! he burst the bars of death!"

(*Night Thoughts—Night 4.*)

The only question that needs to be asked is this: Is the scriptural history of our Saviour true, or is it not? Reason says, "I have examined, and I can say that it surely is." What more, then, can we require? Therefore,

"Bound ev'ry heart, and ev'ry bosom burn."

(*Ibid.*)

mind, will be founded on a mere arbitrary supposition; and the desolate void of Atheism will be the real state of the mind when left to its own conclusions.* What reasonable man, then, will be any other than a Christian?—

(Extracted from a letter sent to the Gentleman's Magazine, and inserted in it.)

XXXVIII.

“THOU turnest man to destruction: again thou sayest, Return, ye children of men.”—PSALM XC. 3.

ONE generation is succeeded by another: and when we consider what passes in the world, we are tempted to say, for what purpose?—so vain are all the pursuits of this life, so reprehensible many of them, and so unsatisfactory, so alloyed with pain and sorrow are its

* If the Deist would fairly examine his opinions, I think he would find this to be the case. But how little inclined we are in general (from various causes) to follow our opinions to their consequences, necessary as that is to enable us to judge of the soundness of them.

highest enjoyments ; alloys that are felt the more as our capacity for and desire of those enjoyments are greater. This state, then, cannot be the final end of our existence ; it must be an intermediate one, or state of trial,* and our

* If life is a state of trial, what makes it so ? Is it not the combat of two opposite principles in man ? If the bad principle prevail in this trial, evil must be generated : and thus the reasons for the existence of evil upon the earth, and for a future state of retribution, appear to alternate with, and mutually to explain each other—indeed to necessitate each other : for without a future state, what compensation would there be for the evil that exists ? and what then should we think of Divine justice ? In this reasoning, the free agency of man is of course included ; for the total absence of evil would leave him without a choice, and all merit, all discrimination, would be banished from the universe. What room would there then be for justice ?

God, whose “mercy is everlasting,” and whose “truth endureth from generation to generation,” sees not those generations pass away, one after another into annihilation. They pass away indeed, but from this transitory life into a permanent one, in another and a better world ; a better world for those who have not, by their conduct here deprived themselves of the benefits which his mercy and his truth have promised in the gospel.

Bristol Hotwells, March 9, 1821.

“Heav’n is all love ; all joy in giving joy ;
It never had created but to bless.
And shall it, then, strike off the list of life
A being blest, or worthy to be so ?
Heav’n starts at an annihilating God.

* * * * *

Nature’s first wish is endless happiness :

hopes of real happiness ("our being's end and aim") must be directed to the compensations of another and a better world. It is impossible, consistently with the goodness and justice of our Creator, that this expectation should be illusive ;

Annihilation is an after-thought,
 A monstrous wish, unborn till virtue dies :
 And oh ! what depth of horror lies inclos'd !
 For non-existence no man ever wish'd,
 But first he wish'd the Deity destroy'd."

(*Night Thoughts—Night 7.*)

The more we consider the state of things such as we see them, the more reason we find for belief in the doctrines contained in our religion ; the more we find them to be such as that state requires. That the lights we thus obtain are not sufficient to illumine the whole of the dispensation, might well be expected from the imperfect state of our faculties ; but sufficient, snrely very sufficient, are those increasing lights which tend to confirm our faith and to encourage our hopes.

In speaking (as is done in the preceding page) of the justice of God, it would be high presumption indeed to suppose that justice implicated any further than would be perfectly consistent with the exercise (great as it is) of his bounty. But are we to suppose that false promises are held out to us, and delusive hopes encouraged, only to be disappointed ? And are we tried, sometimes to the utmost of our bearing, and no result to follow ? Impossible.

If we are to "work out our salvation with fear and trembling," that is, with a solicitude that must increase in proportion to the attention we pay to its ultimate object, the uncertainty of the issue must be necessary to keep alive that solicitude ; and a greater degree of certitude (for enough is given to encourage hope) would be incompatible with it.

and it would be equally absurd to suppose that the fulfilment of it will be unconditional and indiscriminate : accordingly the conditions on which it will be fulfilled, are held out to us in a book that we are too apt to neglect, and even sometimes, with monstrous ingratitude, to vilify : ingratitude that can only be excused on the supposition of insanity.



XXXIX.

“HOPE springs eternal in the human breast,

“Man never is, but always to be blest.”

(Pope's Essay on Man.)

IF this is true, and I believe it is, with respect to that enjoyment of happiness which will really satisfy the human mind, what other reliance can we have for its attainment than upon hope, and the foundations upon which it rests? But these must be strong ; and what stronger,

what higher hope can we have, than that of a future life, and the promises with which the assurance of it is accompanied? Therefore,

“Lord, to thee each night and day,
 “*Strong in hope*, we sing and pray.”

Nothing is more sure, than that the enjoyment of happiness is the great object of man; the desire is inseparable from his thoughts and actions; it is as it were the *primum mobile* of the human mind; it is, in short, “our being’s end and aim.” And it is equally sure, that complete unalloyed happiness is not to be found in any possession this life can afford. Where then shall we find it but in the hopes of a future? But the mere consciousness of this hope, universal as it may be, is not a sufficient security for its being realised. We may call it a mere propensity of the mind, a creature of the imagination, &c. It requires some further confirmation; where shall we find it? Open the bible, and read it there.

Cicero expresses a strong desire of a future life, and even a hope of it, though he speaks of it as a matter of great uncertainty. He wanted the assurance that Christianity has given us. And let it be remembered, that the Being, from whose authority this assurance has been given, has declared himself to be "the God of the Gentiles as well as the Jews;" that is, the God of all mankind. Horace, too, the lively and sensual, but also the sensible and intelligent Horace, says of himself, "*Parcus Deorum cultor et infrequens, insanientis dum sapientiæ consultus erro, nunc retrorsum vela dare, atque iterare cursus cogor relictos;*"—and the inducement he very naturally assigns for this is, his having observed the awful phænomena of nature, and the events and changes in the moral world, which can only be reasonably accounted for by the admission of a divine and overruling Power. The existence of that Power, Christianity has

given us a further assurance of ; it has also given us its attributes (those of the Being who possesses it) of which the two principal are justice and mercy. It has indeed given us doctrines, the belief of which, we may venture to say, would not have been required of us, if they had not been sanctioned by the strongest evidence that the declaration of them proceeded from God. As our reason as well as our feelings is appealed to in requiring the belief of this,* the interpretation of the doctrines delivered is also left to the same arbitration, to a certain degree at least. The joint operation† of our reason and our feelings, properly regulated and influencing each other, will then, with the Divine assistance, direct us what conclusion we

* On the strength of the evidence that supports it.

† In this joint operation, each of these faculties should, I believe, be restricted to its proper limits. If either of them overstep those, one of these two mischiefs will be produced : the predominance of reason, uninfluenced by feeling, will beget a cold scepticism ; that of feeling, unchecked by reason, will be carried into bigotry and fanaticism.

are to come to, and at what point we are to stop in the interpretation of those mysterious doctrines ; and what application we are to make of them, regarding ourselves and our real interests here and hereafter. And however the varying intelligences, passions, interests, or caprices of men may multiply the differences of opinions on these points, if the reason of mankind has an object given it to which to fix itself, short of that intelligence to which it must be aware that it cannot in its present state arrive, it seems probable that that object and the limit at which it is placed, will fix the majority of opinions, and render permanent the cause of truth. Thus “ *Veritas magna est, et prævalebit.* ”

XL.

THE opposition of the two deities (or rather principles) of Eros and

Anteros, in the mythology of the heathens, is, I think, a strong proof of the high idea they (at least those among them who had thought and feeling enough for it) entertained of the Divine nature, to which the sentiment of love approaches as near as can well be imagined ; but to give it this elevation, it must be separated (as it appears to be in that opposition) from all sensuality or impurity whatever. And do not the doctrines and evidences of Christianity afford a most powerful aid and confirmation to these natural suggestions?*

* Benevolence is every thing : it comprises and crowns all the other virtues : the summum bonum must be the end of all exertion, all action ; and every single good action that is done, is a step towards it. The whole, indeed, of life, that is, of the enjoyment of it—and what is life without enjoyment ?—is included in this : whether the kindly or unkindly feelings predominate in our bosoms, and shew themselves in our actions and conduct.

—————“To love and know, in man
Is boundless appetite, and boundless power ;
And these demonstrate boundless objects too.
(*Night Thoughts, Night 7.*)

“Happier as kinder, in whate’er degree,
And height of bliss but height of charity.”
(*Pope’s Essay on Man.*)

 XLI.

ALL the claims which we have upon each other, in a religious or moral point of view, seem to be comprehended in the description given by St. Paul of Charity ; and those claims are stronger in proportion as our addresses to that are sincerer. All the rest, perhaps, delightful as our partialities may be (though sometimes, perhaps often, dangerous) is in fact little more than accident, worldly interest, or caprice, or at least, opinion. To reconcile these to reason and religion, they must be founded on charity. This may be considered as one proof of the

“ The broadest mirth unfeeling folly wears,
Less pleasing far than virtue’s very tears.”*

(*Ibid.*)

“ Man’s lawful pride includes humility ;
Stoops to the lowest ; is too great to find
Inferiors ; all immortal ! brothers all !
Proprietors eternal of thy love.”

(*Night Thoughts—Night 6.*)

- Which compassion is most capable of exciting.

truth and value of the doctrine preached by St. Paul. The importance of charity, in the extended description which St. Paul gives of it, is, I believe, no where more strongly marked than in the Lord's Prayer, where it is made the condition on which we pray for the remission of our sins: "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us:" for the suppression of resentment, and forgiveness of injuries, are but extensions of charity.—Charity, as described by St. Paul, is generosity, is heroism.*

* Charity is love, and "God is love."

This may very well exist in our minds as a general feeling, and be exerted towards individuals without the necessity of particular discrimination, which is often made in compliance with our own humours or inclinations. It is the result of other feelings with which it is connected, and which have their source in the great Being from whom we derive them, and towards whom they must be ultimately directed. With this regard they must continually increase; without it they can have no firm support. Our affections are a duty; and a sense of that duty (to which they must be subservient) makes them an inclination: this will fix and elevate them in our minds, while the objects remain, and be an ample substitute for them when they are lost.—Nor are they lost, when we consider them as removed to the place where we ourselves must also go. The loss of them here on earth is perhaps meant as a counter-balance to, or rather chastisement for—(can it in-

 XLII.

IN social intercourse, complaisance often stands in the place of confidence : but the source and result of both is, or ought to be, good will ; and that confirmed by a sense of our religious duties.

XLIII.

ALL sublunary enjoyments are unsatisfactory to a thinking mind ;* their repetition satiates, their emptiness dissatisfies ; they may please and amuse for a time, but they do no more than divert

deed be any thing else ?)—the too great value we set upon them while they remained with us. If we seek for consolation when we have lost them, it must be in directing our thoughts to the place whither they are gone.

Bristol Hotwells, March 6, 1821.

* In an imperfect state, imperfect enjoyments must occur. These, however, may admit of restriction and correction, and, by a proper mixture, exaltation.

the mind from a higher and more perfect enjoyment, which it is capable of and wishes for, at the same time, indeed, that they divert it also from the cares and troubles of this life, with which, however, they must be mixed. They may occupy the powers of the mind, but they occupy it on unsatisfactory objects, and the highest satisfaction they can give, is in answering an end with which they can be but remotely connected, and which they can but imperfectly attain. But they also not only divert the mind from, but they are often at variance with, its real and natural enjoyments; for they prevent the enjoyment of that calm, that peace which this world cannot give, but which the mind continually longs for, and which we always express when we speak of its highest happiness.*

* "Joy has her tears, and transport has her death;
 Hope, like a cordial, innocent though strong,
 Man's heart at once inspirits and serenes."

(*Night Thoughts, Night 7.*)

"Inspirits and serenes" as much as can be done to a being who is so apt to pine after present happiness, and so

In that state, were it perfect, the mind would be left (under the Divine protection and grace) to its own natural resources, which, if they were not obstructed by external and internal causes, would probably (nay, I may say certainly) produce its highest happiness. But the enjoyments of the world divert the mind from objects infinitely more worthy of it, though, from its condition here, it can at best but imperfectly attain them. They prevent too, perhaps above all, that openness and confidence which the mind naturally longs for in its communication with others: they oblige it to assume a *part*, to wear a kind of mask* to force its own natural inclinations to

alive to the danger of losing it. Hope, however, is still "a cordial:" it

"travels through, nor quits us when we die."

If so essential to human happiness (as much as can here be enjoyed) how can it be delusive? That it is not, every means of knowledge that we have assures us.

* This, however, has its good effects, in counteracting a disposition to self-indulgence: and for the proper use and direction of all this, it is necessary that we "commune with *ourselves*, and in our own chambers."

accommodate itself to the inclinations and interests of others, with which, variously as we are situated and constituted here, its own can never perfectly agree, though they may do so in many material points, and indeed must, to produce any real pleasure in the communication ; for the more confidence there is in it, the more is communication pleasing ; and the most pleasing, when that confidence has the widest extent, and is founded on the purest and most rational bases.* For this
 “There needs but thinking right, and meaning well.”

POPE.

* There are great pleasures in social intercourse, but there may be still greater in solitary meditation ; but the latter are only occasional, and require the intervention of external objects ; of observation ; and this leads to communication with other observers ; and indeed the reflections of our own minds may often give occasion for communication : but it must also be remembered, that even when we are alone, we are not wholly so ; that is, if we know how 'to give a proper direction to our thoughts in "communing with ourselves. A dependence (an entire one at least) for our happiness upon others is little to be desired. It is, perhaps, the worst kind of slavery, except indeed that which binds us to our vices.

“ Nothing in nature, much less conscious being,
 Was e'er created solely for itself.”

(*Night Thoughts, Night 9.*)

 XLIV.

THE highest enjoyments this life can afford us, do little more, perhaps, than awaken desire. Such as they are, too, they are necessarily short, and must

“As bees mixt nectar draw from fragrant flow’rs,
So men from friendship, wisdom and delight :
Twins tied by nature : if they part they die.

* * * * *

Thought, too, delivered, is the more possess’d :
Teaching, we learn ; and giving we retain
The births of intellect ; when dumb forgot.”

(*Ibid*, Night 2.)

“O lost to virtue, lost to manly thought,
Lost to the noble sallies of the soul !
Who think it solitude to be alone.

Communion sweet, communion large and high !
Our reason, guardian angel, and our God !”

(*Ibid*, Night 3.)

In what consists the greatest advantage and pleasure of friendship ? Is it not in communication ? And is not this the more pleasant and advantageous, as it is more confidential, and as its subject is more interesting and important ? And is not religion the most so ? Why do we communicate with our friends ? Is it not to compare our opinions with theirs, and to correct or improve our own, or to confirm ourselves in them, if we find they accord with those of our friends, and that both are sanctioned by reason ? Is it not, in short, to gain additional knowledge from this communication ? But from whence did they acquire theirs, but from the same source to which we ourselves may apply ? Is not this source, then, our best friend ?

leave a void behind them, if they are not succeeded (a transition natural enough to the human heart) by sorrow. If they give real and lasting pleasure on recollection, it must have reference to something else. That our highest enjoyments here do little more than awaken our desires (of still higher enjoyments, by making us feel what our minds are capable of) I think we may be convinced, if we pay attention to what passes within us, and if we consider what those enjoyments are, that excite the highest and the purest sensations. Indeed the highest pleasures which our minds are capable of, must probably be mixed with some degree of sadness, from a sense of the imperfections which obstruct the full enjoyment of them.—There is a “peace which this world cannot give,” but the sense of which may prepare us to expect it in another.

XLV.

WHAT strength of proof do those minds require, which are dissatisfied with that which supports the expectation of a future life? If their feelings have no share in their examination of the arguments in favor of it, their reason may not find enough for its conviction, but it must be associated* with feelings (or rather passions) of a different sort from those which should qualify it for a fair examination, if it is disposed to reject all those arguments and proofs. He who is duly sensible of the insufficiency of his reason to guard him from all error in the conduct of this life, will hardly trust exclusively to it (or at least to his mode

* I should rather say perverted ; for right reason cannot associate with passions that are in opposition to it. Reason, however, stands in need of assistance to guard it against such perversion.

of consulting it) in forming his opinion of the prospect of a future one.

“Born but to die” we certainly are : but what is death? and what shall we say of the mind which is made up (and artificial* and forced indeed must such a making up be) to consider death as altogether an extinction of being?†

Nothing is too vast for our hopes, when they are properly directed : but our hopes are far above all our powers of expression or conception. Indeed “what the eye of man hath not seen, nor the ear heard, nor hath it entered into his heart to conceive,” can only be the undefined object of sensation.

* Artificial, as being in direct opposition to natural feeling and reasonable conclusion, enforced by the best and highest information that we have received or can receive.

† “Were death denied, poor man would live in vain :
Were death denied, to live would not be life :
Were death denied, e’en fools would wish to die.”

(*Night Thoughts, Night 3.*)

XLVI.

A SENTIMENT so natural, and therefore so universal, as the expectation of a future life, in union with, and confirmed by the authority from which Christianity is derived, is as strong as can with propriety be impressed on the mind of man. I say with propriety, for if we had a more thorough conviction of it, from a knowledge that admitted of no doubt* or dispute whatever, it would probably be incompatible with those ends which it is meant to answer, both in this life and the next.†

* " Her own immense appointments to compute,
Or comprehend her high prerogatives,
In this her dark minority, how toils,
How vainly pants, the human soul divine !
Too great the bounty seems for earthly joy :
What heart but trembles at so strange a bliss !"
(*Night Thoughts*, *Night 6*.)

† It would at least be inconsistent with a state of probation :

" Heav'n's promise dormant lies in human hope :
Who wishes life immortal, proves it too."
(*Ibid*, *Night 7*.)

XLVII.

THE sense of a want seems to imply a capacity of possession ; at least in many cases, particularly in the want which the human mind feels (if it feels and reflects at all) of a greater degree of happiness than any it can enjoy in this life. It is only when the mind attends to its own operations, (i. e. to what passes within it) that it is sensible of the desire of happiness which is natural to it, and of the kind of happiness which it longs for, and which alone can satisfy it.*

Oh with what thoughts
 Abhorr'd annihilation blasts the soul,
 And wide extends the bounds of human woe."
(Ibid.)

- * " 'Tis immortality, 'tis that alone,
 Amid life's pains, abasements, emptiness,
 The soul can comfort, elevate, and fill."
(Ibid, Night 6.)
- " Bliss has no being, virtue has no strength,
 But from the prospect of immortal life."
(Ibid, Night 8.)
- " Why then their loss deplore who are not lost ?"
(Ibid, Night 1.)

XLVIII.

WE live upon hope; but to make that of any real avail, it must be extended beyond the term of this life, which is far too short and too uncertain (besides its other deficiencies) to satisfy the wants of our minds; and the immortality of a name is a poor substitute for the real immortality which we are taught and encouraged (both from the highest authority) to hope for.

“ 'Tis moral grandeur makes the mighty man ;
How little they, who think aught great below !”

(*Night Thoughts, Night 6.*)

XLIX.

THE best consolation for the troubles of this life, is what they themselves afford, in awakening the hope of another.

What, indeed, is this world, that we take so much pleasure in it? or rather what would it be, if it was not the passage to another? But how transitory, how delusory, are the suggestions of our most serious thoughts—true as they are; or if serious thoughts do not lead to truth, by what road shall we hope to arrive at it?

However, even the levity of mankind may have its use, if not too far indulged; and the idea of the French poet, (properly understood, modified and explained) may be verified, that “le Ciel a fait les hommes legers et vains, pour les rendre moins miserables!”†

* If life is not a state of probation, what is it?

“All is delusion; nature is wrapt up,
In ten-fold night, from Reason’s keenest eye;
There’s no consistence, meaning, plan, or end,
In all beneath the sun, in all above,
(As far as man can penetrate) or heaven
Is an immense, inestimable prize;
Or all is nothing, or that prize is all.”

(*Night Thoughts, Night 7.*)

† Serious thoughts may be considered as the *tension* of the mind: levity (innocent levity) the *relaxation* of it.

Le Ciel peut avoir fait les hommes “legers et vains;” mais il les a fait aussi pour etre quelque chose de mieux

L.

EQUALLY wonderful are human knowledge and human ignorance ; both, at the same time, equally manifesting the ends for which they were dispensed, and the wisdom, power, and goodness of the Almighty Being who dispensed them. In our weakness is God magnified : in our weakness too (our dependence upon him) we are strong.

LI.

THOSE who argue against the doctrines of Christianity, do not do it so much

que cela. Voltaire's resource is only for those who are not capable of finding a better.

There is more wit than truth in this poetical sally : are those who are not "legers et vains" (if the exceptions are allowed), or who are less so than others, necessarily made more miserable by it? or if all were so, would it have the same consequence?

from superior strength of mind, as from want of feeling.* Strong conviction, indeed, is generally produced by a mixture of reason and feeling.†

LII.

PERHAPS the greatest beauty we can see, hear, or consider (as in painting, music, poetry, or in sensible objects, natural scenery, &c.) only serves to raise conceptions in the mind of something still higher.

* The Esprits-forts (free-thinkers) would regard this "feeling" as arising from weakness; but what is their force d'esprit? It is as much demonstrated in emancipating itself from the controul of reason (in the perversion of it) as of feeling. But,

"Our infidels are Satan's hypocrites,
Pretend the worst, and, at the bottom, fail:
When visited by thought (thought will intrude)
Like him they serve, they tremble and believe."
(*Night Thoughts, Night 7.*)

Be this however said with some allowance for human error.

† "Reason is man's peculiar; sense, the brute's."
(*Ibid.*)

 LIII.

THE best proof of a well-disposed mind is to be capable of still further improvement and elevation.

L V.

MAN thinks of his end, which we cannot suppose that beasts ever do.* What a difference does this make between them ! Man thinks of death (if he thinks rightly) as of the end for which he lives ; and of his life, as the

* Beasts then have their compensation in the want of *mind*, or in the quality of what is given them as a substitute for it. The compensation of man (for surely he has his share of the general justice !) must be in what is adapted to his possession of mind, and all that it comprehends and gives rise to.

“Life animal is nurtur’d by the sun,
Thrives on his bounties, triumphs in his beams,
Life rational subsists on higher food,
Triumphant in *his* beams, who made the day.
(*Ibid.*)

passage, and as the means subordinate to, and designed for that end. Must not then the end be of more importance than the means? but of what importance would it be if it were *only* the end of life, and followed by nothing else?

“Life has no value, as an end, but means.”

(*Night Thoughts, Night 3.*)

LV.

MAN'S wishes betray his wants : and how high will his wishes soar, when they are not debased by his vices !

LVI.

How strongly does Prayer express the natural wishes of the human heart ! and how necessary is it, to a feeling one, to fill the void that all the enjoyments of this world leave behind them, and to heal the

wounds, or at least to soften the pains, that its troubles create! Prayer is the ultimate appeal for all we desire, to the only Power that can ensure our attainment of it.*

LVII.

Does not the increasing activity of our minds† as we advance in age (or at least the increase of matter to exercise it) make us more sensible of the growing

* "Religion! Providence! an after state;
Here is firm footing, here is solid rock;
This can support us; all is sea besides;
Sinks under us, bestorms, and then devours.
(*Night Thoughts*, *Night 4*.)

"In every storm, that either frowns, or falls,
What an asylum has the soul in prayer!"
(*Ibid*, *Night 9*.)

One great difficulty in bringing our feelings to the standard of religious precept, seems to be the necessity required of sacrificing our feelings as men to that object, or at least of devoting them to it. But the nature and condition of those feelings require this, as their objects on earth are all precarious, and therefore they must have a certain and unfailing support, which can only be found in religion. This truth is felt, when losses and misfortunes befall us.

† That is of reflective minds.

weakness and infirmities of our bodies ? but it makes us look forward to another state, when this variance shall cease.

LVIII.

IN youth, time slips away without our observing it: but when we begin to observe and reflect upon it, we then perceive how fleeting it is, and how short are its periods.*

LIX.

THERE are few days in which something does not occur to make us feel that life is a state of trial.

* " All mankind mistake their time of day,
Even age itself: fresh hopes are hourly sown
In furrow'd brows. So gentle life's descent,
We shut our eyes, and think it is a plain.
(*Night Thoughts, Night 2.*)

LX.

How much and how evidently has virtue the pre-eminence over every other quality or possession ! How necessary is it to the welfare of societies and individuals ! and how closely is it connected with, and how strongly confirmed by, religion !*

* "Virtue alone entenders us for life :
I wrong her much—entenders us for ever."

(*Night Thoughts, Night 2.*)

This surely is as fine a thought as can well be conceived :
and, as I hope and believe, as true a one.

—"Peace, O Virtue, peace is all thy own."

(*Pope's Essay on Man.*)

"Virtue's foundations with the world were laid ;
Heaven mix'd her with our make, and twisted close
Her sacred interests with the strings of life."

(*Night Thoughts, Night 8.*)

"Virtue, which Christian motives best inspire ;
And bliss, which Christian schemes alone insure !"

(*Ibid, Night 3.*)

"Each virtue brings in hand a golden dower
Far richer in reversion ; hope exults,
And, tho' much bitter in our cup is thrown,
Predominates, and gives the taste of heaven.
Oh ! wherefore is the Deity so kind ?
Astonishing beyond astonishment !
Heaven our reward—for heaven enjoyed below."

(*Ibid Night 9.*)

LXI.

ALL the events of life are uncertain : on what then do they depend ? Not on chance, for there is no such thing : we must refer them, then, to the power and will of that Almighty Being, to whom common sense (the surest guide of our reasoning faculty) instigates our continual appeal.

LXII.

IN the early part of life we seem to act more from impulse than reflection, and to find our chief enjoyment in the exercise of the passions ; but as age

Virtue—*uti ver*—and may there not be truth (metaphorical truth) even in an anagram ?

Metaphors are illustrative of the truths in which they are founded.

advances, the habit of thought increases, and with it the wish for that peace of mind which the exercise of thought requires; and the more this is felt, the more we attend to every thing that is necessary (in whatever concerns the state or regulation of our minds) for the security of that peace. The possession of it is the greatest blessing that can be enjoyed in this world, and the nearest approach to what we hope for in the next.*

LXIII.

How apt are the enjoyments of this world to mix pain with pleasure, by re-

* “Age should fly, concourse, cover in retreat
 Defects of judgment; and the will subdue;
 Walk thoughtful on the silent, solemn shore
 Of that vast ocean it must sail so soon;
 And put good works on board; and wait the wind
 That shortly blows us into worlds unknown:
 If unconsidered too, a dreadful scene.”

(*Night Thoughts, Night 5.*)

Those who make the proper use of their reason, will know to what extent this is to be understood and practised.

fining our sense of them ! a refinement which but too often produces a wish to add to them more than is reasonable. We certainly ought to repress such wishes, but we may not always be able to do it sufficiently to make us thoroughly content with what we have.*

LXIV.

ALL practice must fall short of precept : for we have in our minds ideas (as well as the power of expressing them)

* The best remedy for this is, to fix our thoughts upon what is infinitely above any thing we can possess or enjoy here, and to consider all the rest as subordinate to that. Disappointed expectations will, or ought to, lead to this.

“On knowing what our mortal state admits,
Life’s modest joys we ruin, while we raise ;
And all our extasies are wounds to peace :
Peace, the full portion of mankind below.

(*Night Thoughts, Night 5.*)

“So man is made, nought ministers delight,
But what his glowing passions can engage ;
And glowing passions, bent on aught below,
Must, soon or late, with anguish turn the scale ;
And anguish, after rapture, how severe !”

(*Ibid, Night 3.*)

of moral excellence, higher than we can reach in practice. Thus it is one thing to preach,* and another to practise. It is not the less our duty, however, to bring our practice as near to those precepts and those ideas as we can.

LXV.

SELF-KNOWLEDGE is perhaps the most difficult of all attainments: those "secret faults" which the psalmist prayed to be "cleansed from," may (in their sources at least) be beyond the reach of our powers of discovery. Our knowledge, both of ourselves and others, must at the best be very imperfect: but our knowledge of others may sometimes, and in some respect, be greater† than that of

* That is, when we preach with a sincere desire to practise.

† As not being so liable to self-deception. However, there may be other sources of deception in the judgment we form of others. We cannot, at any rate, penetrate

ourselves; so mixed is the condition of humanity.

“E cælo descendit, γνωθι σεαυτον.”

LXVI.

OUR knowledge of ourselves must at the best be very imperfect; we can only judge of ourselves from the trials we have been exposed to, and the inclinations we have either indulged, or have only felt without giving way to them.

What effects new temptations, or any change of circumstances, might produce in us, we can have little or no idea of; and as to those virtues or vices which

so far into their bosoms as into our own. We may conclude, that the means which are given us of judging in both cases (of others and ourselves) are consonant to the ends which are to be answered by them: in the former, as examples to be followed or to be avoided; in the latter as enabling us to correct ourselves. If we exceed, or deviate from, these purposes, we shall probably be sooner or later admonished by the consequences of our error.—

“Man, know thyself: all wisdom centres there.”
(*Night Thoughts*, Night 4.)

we know ourselves to be more or less addicted to, we are full as much at a loss in attempting to trace them to their primary sources. If we attribute them to early impressions, or to the accidental (as we may call them) circumstances in which we have been placed, it is because our recollections will carry us no further back, nor our reflections enable us to go deeper in investigation; if to innate propensities, it is probably for want of a better solution of the question. Perhaps physical causes may present a greater appearance of probability; but we cannot well ascertain how far any of those may be peculiar to each of us, as part of our nature, or common to us with the rest of mankind, and brought into action by external causes.* One thing, however, appears to be certain, amidst all this uncertainty; that we have a consciousness which indicates our

* Strengthened by our want of resistance to them.

power of choice in our actions, by reproaching us when we have made a bad one. It may be stifled, or not attended to, but it does not the less exist in us, though we even have it in our power to pervert its judgments and dictates. It has, besides, the faculty of impressing us with a general sense of the defects of our nature,* in making us sensible how little we can be secure, under certain circumstances, against the commission of the worst actions that we hear of in others; and this, by so greatly widening the sphere of the operations of conscience, seems to afford additional means, under the protection of the Divine Providence, of providing for our security.

The imperfection then of self-knowledge must often expose us to the danger of self-delusion, the only remedy for

* In this world, what individuals are reproached with as faults, may often be only infirmities; there may therefore be more reason to hope, that they will meet with mercy in the next. But this must not make us remiss. we must "watch" as well as "pray."

which is, self-distrust ; this will evince the necessity of self-denial ; and o ur general security (with the Divine assistance) must be in self-command.

LXVII.

“ *DETERIORA sequi*” does not exclude “ *meliora videre* :” on the contrary, it is the perception of the one that makes us sensible of the fault we commit in following the other. Our sense of the *meliora* is to be estimated by the judgment of our reason, which, with an appeal to the common sense of mankind, will inform us whether those are in an error who form ideas different from ours. If we ourselves err, a due reference to the same authorities will make us sensible of our error, and our continuance in it will then be the result of our passions, habits, or prejudices, and in contradiction to our better judgment.

Will not this apply, more or less, to all errors, in religion, morals, or politics? The preceding reflection was (as my reader, if I should chance to have one, will probably see) suggested by the difficulty that we sometimes hear spoken of, of judging between different opinions, and of finding out Truth amid the chaos of "*tot homines, tot sententiæ*," which may be equally difficult to do, whether she is lost in a crowd, or sunk in the bottom of a "well." Somewhere, however, she must be, being eternal and immutable; and deep as the well may be, she may be "dragged out by the locks" (as Hotspur would do with "honour") and not in a "drowned" state neither, whatever may be the case with honour, which we see may be either in the "moon," or in the "bottom of the sea;" but wherever the caprice of mankind may place her, it is only where Truth is, that honor will really be found.

Perhaps the difficulty of finding Truth may sometimes result from that of settling the comparative merits of the two opposite sides of a question in dispute ; both may be so faulty, that to find where the truth lies, it will be necessary to go farther back, and deeper than a mere comparative examination of them will reach.

LXVIII.

THERE seems to be something in the human character* which is out of the reach of human estimation : we may judge of particular qualities, and of a character in general ; but that judgment must be very imperfect,† when we attempt to trace each quality to its source,

* “ How poor, how rich, how abject, how august,
How complicate, how wonderful, is man !

How counterpois'd his origin from dust
How counterpois'd to dust his sad return !”

(*Night Thoughts, Night 1.*)

† In proportion at least to the want of simplicity in character ; for when people's intentions are good, little is wanted to make them known to each other.

or to see how it is connected with, or influences, and is influenced by others ; and how it contributes to form a general whole. The best way of estimating this difficulty is, I believe, by examining ourselves. Every thing here on earth is mixed and balanced ; and so mixed, that to analyse it thoroughly is out of our power: our knowledge is of that relative kind, that answers the purposes for which we exist ; and the sense of our ignorance makes us look to purposes of a higher kind, for which we are destined : for to be sensible of our ignorance is, in a manner, to soar above it. But this we cannot do without assistance, and that assistance we have received.

LXIX.

Two of the greatest difficulties in life, I believe are, to be perfectly just in our opinion of men and things ; and, to dis-

tinguish those things which are of real consequence, and to be solicitous only about them. The nearer we approach to these points, the more we shall probably be satisfied with ourselves.* But on what does this depend?†



LXX.

THE choice of our occupations is certainly of importance, but the manner in which we occupy ourselves is perhaps of still more; for by this, their effect on the mind is shown, and their ultimate result determined. To this all must be subordinate, as being the medium through which the mind is seen. To fortify, expand, and elevate the powers of the

* "The mind that would be happy, must be great;
Great in its wishes, great in its surveys."

(*Night Thoughts, Night 9.*)

† "Teach my best reason, reason; my best will
Teach rectitude; and fix my firm resolve
Wisdom to wed, and pay her long arrear."

(*Ibid, Night 1*)

mind, should be the great business of human life ; to teach the mind to know itself, and to use that knowledge for its real improvement ; to give it at once a consciousness of its own strength and of its dependence ; to raise it above the allurements of sense, to make it feel its destination, and look up with humble awe, but with inspiring hope, to the great Being on whom that destination depends ; to make it feel that the source of happiness is in itself,* and not in the objects that surround it.†

LXXI.

“ NUNC vino tentas, nunc somno pel-
lere curam.” Attempts to fly away from

* In itself, for God is within us: we are his “*Temples* ;” let them not then be “*defiled*.”

† ————— “ Go, fix some weighty truth
Chain down some passion ; do some generous good ;
Teach ignorance to see, or grief to smile ;
Correct thy friend ; befriend thy greatest foe ;
Or, with warm heart, and confidence divine,
Spring up, and lay strong hold on him who made thee.”
(*Night Thoughts, Night 8.*)

care, are attempts to fly away from ourselves.”*

LXXII.

THERE is an attention to ourselves which is always necessary, or at least useful, though it may not always be pleasant ; it makes amends, however, by its effects :† and the stores of knowledge and powers of expression that we possess or acquire will, we may trust, in an improved state, be a source of far higher enjoyment to us hereafter, when all that obstructs them is done away ; of this we know and feel enough in our present state to be assured.‡ But truths, as to

* “ Life’s cares are comforts ; Heaven design’d them so ;
Who seeks content must make them, or be wretched.”
(*Night Thoughts.*)

† That is when it is not carried too far. If it is,
“ In culpa est animus, qui se non effugit unquam.”

‡ Assured, both by the experience of our own feelings, and the information we have received.

their effects upon our minds, are nothing* to us unless we feel them ; inforced as they may be by all the dictates of reason.

LXXIII.

WE learn through life. Those who reflect are sensible how much they learn, and how much deeper lies that knowledge of which here we can have but an imperfect attainment.† And is that power of attainment, and that sense of its imperfection, and of what lies beyond it, and that *capacity* for, and *desire* of, knowledge and happiness (the hoped-for results of *these*) given us only to be extinguished in death ? No ; we have an instinctive persuasion that it will be con-

* That is, they have no influence on us.

† “ Were man to live coeval with the sun,
The patriarch-pupil would be learning still ;
Yet, dying, leave his lesson half unlearn’t.”
(*Night Thoughts*, Night 7.)

tinued and improved ; and that persuasion is confirmed, in terms that fully accord with its dictates, and express them as perfectly as language can, from an authority which both our reason and our feelings tell us, is the highest that we can receive an information from.

Our warmest affections are often mixed with a degree of sensuality, that decreases and is lost as we advance in age, without our losing any part of the affections themselves, the disposition to which, on the contrary, grows stronger as it grows purer. And is this, too, to be lost in death ? No ; it is the gradual expansion of a faculty which waits its further progress in a future state, towards a perfection of which this is only the beginning.*

* “ Were man to perish when most fit to live,
 O how mispent were all those stratagems,
 By skill divine inwoven in our frame !
 Where are heaven’s holiness and mercy fled ?
 Laughs heaven, at once, at virtue, and at man ?
 If not, why that discourag’d, this destroy’d ?”
(Night Thoughts, Night 7.)

What is imagination?* Is it given us merely to build castles in the air with? No.

LXXIV.

THE best enjoyments this world can afford, can, I think, amount to little more than dissipation (I do not mean in the worst or lightest sense of that word) unless they are connected with the prospects of another. All our attention to our duties in this, all our serious thoughts, must surely, directly or indirectly, have that reference and con-

Without a future state this world would be, as the Night Thoughts emphatically express it, "but the shambles of Omnipotence." (*Ibid.*)

"If human souls, why not angelic too,
Extinguished? and a solitary God,
O'er ghastly ruin, frowning from his throne?"
(*Ibid.*)

* Imagination, when properly directed, is the suggestion of something of which we cannot have a clear perception, but which is corroborated by the deductions of our reason.

nection.* What else can give them real value or importance? and what can alleviate the troubles of life, what can console for the misfortunes of it, but resignation to the will, and trust in the mercies, of that Being, who is the Master and Disposer of both worlds, in whose hands are the issues of life and death?†

LXXV.

————— “And yet, deluded man,
A scene of crude disjointed visions past
And broken slumbers, rises still resolved,
With new-flushed hopes, to run the giddy round.”
(*Thomson's Seasons.*)

A GIDDY round ought certainly not to be run, nor hopes indulged which excite

* “Is faith a refuge for our happiness?
Most sure: and is it not for reason too?
Nothing this world unriddles but the next.”
(*Night Thoughts, Night 7.*)

† “With piety begins all good on earth:
’Tis the first-born of rationality.”
(*Ibid, Night 8.*)

to it ; but “ new-flushed hopes,” directed to reasonable objects, may often be necessary to minds which feel some degree of sadness in the disappointment of perhaps their most unblameable expectations. We cannot go through life with insensibility, though the degrees of sensibility may be as various as the causes which excite it, and the manner in which it shews itself. We live between hopes and fears ; and the events which befall us, of what kind soever they are, are often worse than the promises of the one, and better than the suggestions of the other. The attempt of the Stoics and Epicureans to exempt themselves from these viscissitudes, the one by shutting their minds against all affections, the other by opening *them** only to pleasurable ones, were equally absurd and

* And perhaps the *mouth* to potations of the “ rich ichor, of the generous blood of Bacchus,” &c. : but take care, Epicurean, “ ne te potum largius (let it be rather *arctius*) æquo, rideat et pulset, &c.—This would be paying dear for the “ mero caluisse.”

impracticable. There are, indeed, other resources ; fortitude, which is a kind and degree of Stoicism, is a very material one ; but there is one above all, which philosophy could not teach, and that is, religion *

LXXVI.

“HEAVINESS may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning,” seems to be exemplified in nothing more than in the changes which our minds are subject to, often from no apparent cause but their own versatility, which alternately elevates or depresses them,*

“Let us, henceforth, in sweetest union join
The two supports of human happiness,
Which some, erroneous, think can never meet ;
True taste of life, and constant thought of death :
The thought of death, sole victor of its dread.”

(*Night Thoughts*, Night 8.)

* When will these vicissitudes have an end ? But why should they end ?—Yes, if *well*, and they will—Deo volente et adjuvante, they will. In the mean time, Reader,
“Tu, quaecumque Deus tibi fortunaverit horam,
Grata sume manu.”

almost in the extremes. The goodness of Providence is perhaps manifested in nothing more than in enabling us, notwithstanding this versatility, to follow one steady line of conduct, at least in the most important points ; for which each of us has to offer his tribute of praise and thankfulness ; feeling, however, and acknowledging our indispensable want of other supports than the resources of our own minds.

LXXVII.

A RELIANCE upon mere fortitude to bear the ills of life, I think, supposes but little sensibility, with which indeed neither a sturdy endurance, nor a diffusive flow of animal spirits, seem very compatible, opposite as are the qualities which are sometimes to be met with in the same character. A greater degree of sensibility (which seems to be a mix-

ture of thought and feeling) requires other supports and resources, of which the best is surely religion.*

The promise of a state in which "the tears are to be wiped away from all eyes," is not addressed to (or at least can have no effect upon) those who have no feeling or whose feelings are perverted.

LXXVIII.

RESPECT yourself. The higher the motive for this is, the more the observance and effect of it will be ensured : there can be no higher motive than religion : mere worldly policy is little more

* "To grieve, as conscious grief may rise to joy ;
So joy, as conscious joy to grief may fall.

* * * * *
Ill firmly to support, good fully taste,
Is the whole science of felicity.

* * * * *
Some joys endear eternity ; some give
Abhorr'd annihilation dreadful charms."

(*Night Thoughts*, Night 8.)

than an exertion of cunning,* which may induce us to seek the respect of others, and may succeed in obtaining it, at least to a certain degree ; for our responsibility to society is enforced by the consequences that attend the observance or the violation of it, and the balance is maintained in favor of virtue ; and worthy characters are not suffered to be the dupes or victims of vice and hypocrisy : but as our great responsibility is to our Creator, it is reasonable to expect that the consequences of the violation of that should be more certain and important.† In respecting ourselves, it is that responsibility that we respect, and no consideration can place us in a

* Cunning is perhaps too harsh a term : but the heart cannot be much interested, at least in the manner it ought to be, when worldly interest or reputation is the main object. Our social feelings, however, may be often more connected with those of religion, and may approach nearer to a congeniality with them, than we are ourselves aware of : if they do, they will soon find their proper refuge.

† In the seductions of the world, are we in more danger from our minds or from our bodies ?

higher light in regard to our duty, or in a lower in regard to our dependence; for it makes us sensible how little power our reason has over our passions, unless it is enforced by the precepts and encouragements of religion; and that may well be sufficient for us; the great reward, the great punishment, cannot be supposed to take place in this world: if they did, they would probably be final.

LXXIX.

IF the world gives us credit for a general good conduct,* we should take

* "Not absolutely vain is human praise,
When human is supported by Divine.

* * * * *
What is it, but the love of praise, inspires,
Matures, refines, embellishes, exalts
Earth's happiness? * * *

* * * * *
Praise is the salt that seasons right to man,
And whets his appetite for moral good.
Thirst of applause is virtue's second guard;
Reason her first." &c.

(*Night Thoughts, Night 7.*)

take care not to be so well satisfied with that, as to make us careless of endeavouring to add to that credit (which the world,* at least the better part of it, knows how to apportion), and what is of far more importance, to procure our acquittal at a much higher tribunal.

LXXX.

IN the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican, the pride, &c. of the one is contrasted with the humility of the other, thereby to enforce the latter sentiment, and to reprobate the former. As to myself, I own that I am sometimes inclined to say with (though I hope not like) the Pharisee, "Lord, I thank thee that I am no ,," &c.; and at others with the Publican, " Lord, be merciful to me

* The world may err in its judgments; but any charge that we may make against the justice of them, will generally retort upon ourselves.

a sinner :” or I should rather say, that I feel both at the same time. Thus they appear to be contrasted, in order to encourage the one* and discourage the other, by a marked preference being given in favour of the humbler feeling ; for in other respects, the pride, &c. of the Pharisee was probably equal in the balance to the sins of the Publican. The union of opposite feelings above-mentioned is expressed by Shakspeare, in “ our virtues would be proud if they were not whipped by our vices ; and our vices (i. e. our sense of them) would despair, if they (we) were not cherished by our virtues.”

LXXXI.

ORLANDO, in “ As you like it,” answers Jacques’s proposal to him to rail against

* Existing, as they may, in the mind at the same time.

the rest of mankind, by saying that he would only "rail against himself, in whom he knew most faults." And this must probably be the case of every man, and for this reason, that he must know himself (if he reflects at all) better than he can know any one else. So just is Shakspeare to nature and to truth!

"I will rail only on myself, in whom I know most faults"—is the answer of a sincere and reasonable man, to a self-conceited,* or at least a whimsical, misanthropist. Whim indeed may (and probably does) imply self-conceit; but must we not shew some indulgence to human eccentricities, because they require it, or rather because we have no right to be severe upon them? Orlando's answer to Jacques is, I believe, an answer to this too. Discrimination, however, must be made between different cha-

* Self-confidence (or at least a want of self-knowledge) seems to be the essence of such a character as that of "Jacques."

racters, but with caution and diffidence: What says St. Paul ? “ Let your moderation be known to all men,”—not the moderation of policy, but of sincerity and self-examination.

How much of the latter do we want ! But in saying “ we,” do I not fall myself under the lash of Orlando’s reproof ? Do I not seek to lessen my own faults, by generalising them ? How shall we escape this “ treachery” of the heart ? What ? “ we” again ?

LXXXII.

WHAT link is there (can there possibly be) wanting in the chain that connects the human mind with religion, and with its source ?*

* For it is equally binding on our reason and our feelings : both acknowledge its force ; both want its support : all else is “ a rope of sand.”

LXXXIII.

THE best way, perhaps, to insure our candid judgment of men, is not to put too much confidence in them: this will prevent our minds from being soured (and our judgments consequently biassed) by disappointments.

LXXXIV.

How often have we to appeal from our humours to our better judgments!

LXXXV.

There are some people whom, if it were not for Christian charity, one would almost wish to see reduced to the "as, laquei pretium;" but while there is *life*, there is hope.

LXXXVI.

How useful are second thoughts ! but to make them thoroughly so, they should be well reflected upon.

LXXXVII.

Our opinions and feelings regarding other people, often differ according as their good or bad qualities are uppermost in our minds ; and so perhaps it is regarding ourselves.

LXXXIIVI.

If I know not myself, how can I pretend to judge of others ? The best resource and remedy for the ignorance

of ourselves, and for the pain and the still more serious evils that may flow from it, is to impress upon our minds, and to act under, the conviction that God knows us; and that as he will judge, he will also have mercy upon us, if we do not presume too much on the expectation of it.

LXXXIX.

“SINS, negligences, and ignorances.”
How much does that comprehend!

XC.

WHOSE faith is perfect?*

* The imperfection of our nature will, more or less, affect our religious belief, as well as our moral dispositions; and though the sense of that imperfection may well impel us to seek for help, in the source where the fair use of our reason, in examining the evidence for the Christian doctrines, will more and more induce us to assent to the truth

XCI.

SOLICITUDE is both the parent and the child of thought.

XCII.

MOTIVES are, or depend upon, predispositions ; our consciousness of these may often be, at the best, but imperfect. What else can we understand by " Who can tell how oft he offendeth ? O . cleanse thou me from my secret faults ! "

of them ; yet, the want of a more perfect intelligence, and probably too the counteraction of our passions, will make the life of the most pious Christian one continued effort (as indeed we are told it is " a state of warfare ") and will give him frequent occasion to say, " Lord, I *believe*, help thou mine unbelief." We may trust, however, that neither the efforts which he makes, nor the prayer which he utters, will be in vain.

XCIII.

THE virtues are so nearly allied, that no one of them perhaps can be possessed in any degree of perfection, without all the others*. This should make us cautious how we indulge ideas of atonement for deficiency in one, by the exercise of others ; and, while we exert our best endeavours to fill up as much of the measure as we can, should make us look up to the throne of mercy for the remission we so much stand in need of.

* The reason for our striving to attain them being the same (or nearly so) with that for our fulfilment of the commandments, the violation (wilful violation) of one of which, we are told, includes that of all the others. A deliberate compromise cannot well be made without a view to self-indulgence ; a propensity that may give rise to every wrong one.

“ Virtue, our present peace, our future prize.

Man’s unprecarious natural estate,

Improvable at will, in virtue lies ;

Its tenure sure ; its income is divine.”

(*Night Thoughts*, Night 6.)

XCIV.

PATIENCE and perseverance, patience in enduring the troubles of this life, various and multiplied as they may be, which are not in our power to prevent ; perseverance in performing the duties of it, which, however various, and perhaps sometimes difficult, are within our power ; for the exertion of the power which each of us possesses, must, we may presume, be the measure of our duty and responsibility ; but how far the exact fulfilment of that responsibility will be required of us, or how far the justice that requires it, will be tempered by mercy, must be decided at that tribunal at which we all must appear, but the decision of which none of us can foresee. This, however, we are told by the prophet Micah ; “ What is required of thee, O man, but that thou shouldest do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly

with thy God." Justice with all its duties, mercy with all its benevolences, and humility, to which we are impelled by our reason and the sense of our weakness and dependence, and of the greatness of the Being on whom we depend : these are what are required of us, and on the observance of these depends our happiness both here and hereafter ; for the sense of their fulfilment, as far as lies in our power, is the best enjoyment this life can afford.*

XCV.

" LIFE is a jest, and all things shew it ;

I thought so once, but now I know it."

So says Gay's witty but absurd and inconsistent epitaph. For if Gay knew

* "Soul, body, fortune ! every good pertains
To one of these ; but prize not all alike ;
The goods of fortune to thy body's health,
Body to soul, and soul submit to God.

* * * * *

Our schemes to plan by this world or the next,
Is the sole difference between wise and fool."

(*Night Thoughts*, Night 8)

it after his death, then the soul is immortal, and there is a future life, and this life is only a passage to, and preparation for it: how then can this life be called a jest? unless indeed we are to say that all is a jest, and this life only a passage from one jest to another, which, I believe, would not be more absurd than what Gay says. But these are questions which wit, spleen, or levity do not ask themselves. We give way to the suggestions of our own humours, or of partial and prejudiced consideration, and we forget the honest old proverb, that "second thoughts are best."

"*Humanum est errare et nescire;*" 'tis true: but our errors may be (and are) in part the effect of the ill habits, passions, or prejudices that we have indulged, and our ignorance of the neglect or misuse of the faculties that are given us. If we think or feel at all, we shall find that we are responsible to ourselves; that we have a monitor and judge within.

us, whose admonitions and decisions are, we may be pretty sure, referable and subject to the final ones of a higher tribunal, whose revision they may stand in need of: for it is in our power (and no small part or proof of our free agency that !) to corrupt and pervert, or rather to stifle, the voice of our conscience. But it is at our own peril that we do that; for by it we violate the most important part of our responsibility, in corrupting and perverting the very source of the means and securities that are given us for the fulfilment of it.*

* "Follow nature still,

But look it be thine own: is conscience then

No part of nature? is she not supreme?

Thou regicide! O raise her from the dead!

Then follow nature, and resemble God.

When, spite of conscience, pleasure is pursued,

Man's nature is unnaturally pleas'd;

And what's unnatural, is painful too

At intervals."

(*Night Thoughts, Night 8.*)

"Oh! be a man;—and strive to be a god.

'For what? (thou say'st) to damp the joys of life?

No; to give heart and substance to thy joys.

(*Ibid, Night 3.*)

"A blest hereafter, then, or hop'd, or gain'd,

Is all; our whole of happiness: full proof

I chose no trivial or inglorious theme." (*Ibid.*)

XCVI.

IF we consider nothing as of any consequence, life will be a blank, and we must soon grow tired of it ; if too many things, the mind will be perpetually harassed, and, perhaps worn out by continual attention and solicitude: the only thing that is sure to satisfy us, is, the fulfilment of the great duties of this life, with a due regard to its consequences in the next ; for the only thing of real consequence in life is (to use the word in a double sense) the *end* of it.*

There are, indeed, many things that give us disquietude in life ; but, perhaps, what ought to give us the most is the sense of our own imperfections : but in

* “ Nothing can make it less than mad in man,
To put forth all his ardor, all his art,
And give his soul her full unbounded flight,
But reaching Him who gave her wings to fly.”
(*Night Thoughts*, Night 6.)

this, a distinction is to be made (on due consideration) between those which we can or cannot help. But if life is a state of probation, in what part of it can we expect perfect satisfaction? The most important object in life, is to know what is of real consequence. Shall we say that things are of consequence according as we make them so? Certainly not. What then is of real consequence? Our reason, with the higher aids which have been vouchsafed to it, will inform us.*

XCVII.

ALL is illusion here : the satiety we feel in our enjoyments, our experience of their uncertainty, and of that of the

* "In the great future buried deep,
Beyond our plans of empire and renown,
Lies all that man with ardor should pursue :
And he who made him, bent him to the right."
(*Night Thoughts*, *Night 7*.)

prosperity of states, &c. shew that it is not meant that we should place our chief interest in any thing this world can afford.* Life is a school for individuals, and the fate of nations makes a part of its discipline ; this is severe sometimes, but what a conclusion does that severity afford!†

XCVIII.

WHAT beauty there is in figurative expression ! “ Thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw

* This needs not obstruct our rational enjoyment of life ; for we do not (nor need we) live constantly in the habit of entertaining these serious (or, if you will, gloomy) thoughts. They may, however, be sometimes of use ; and perhaps should never be wholly lost sight of. The mind that is never serious is little to be envied.

† To allege the necessity of this state of things, is by no means to explain its cause ; that necessity cannot be self-existent, but must have its origin in a higher dispensation, the depth and wisdom of which we are totally unable to fathom. That life is a state of probation is all that we can, or that we need to know.

In what part of our lives are not the protection and direction of an Almighty hand wanted ?

itself ; for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.”—“ The Sun of Righteousness shall rise with healing in his wings.” How strongly do these passages address themselves to the imagination and the feelings ! Not meant to be understood literally, but allusively to the effects which the sensible objects mentioned in them have upon our minds, they refer us to a substitute for those objects, which will have the same effect in an infinitely higher degree, and without being subject to the imperfections which accompany them : that substitute being no less than the source from which all those effects flow. How naturally do our minds look up to this Source* (“through nature to nature’s God”) with the desire and the hope of future powers of actually contemplating

* Feelings which increase in us as we advance in life and as we become more sensible of, and more experienced in, its imperfections, its troubles, and its sorrows.

it ! Let not this be mistaken for the language of enthusiasm : * it is the natural expression of the feelings of every mind in which they are unperverted, and which, in meditating on what passes within itself, can trace those feelings to its proper source.

So the "Night Thoughts,"

"Man but dives in death,

Dives from the sun in fairer day to rise."

And do we not hope this? And can any mind that studies its own real happiness, and its most natural and most ardent wishes, dispense with the indul-

• "Enthusiastic, this? then all are weak,
But rank enthusiasts. To this god-like height
Some souls have soar'd; or martyrs ne'er had bled.
And all may do what has by man been done."

(*Night Thoughts, Night 6.*)

"Man's immortality alone can solve
That darkest of enigmas, human hope;
Of all the darkest, if at death we die.

* * * * *

Consider man as an immortal being,
Intelligible all, and all is great:
A crystalline transparency prevails,
And strikes full lustre thro' the human sphere:
Consider man as mortal, all is dark
And wretched; reason weeps at the survey."

(*Ibid, Night 7.*)

gence of that hope? True it is, indeed, that the objects of sense, and the impulse of our passions, are continually diverting us from these more abstracted contemplations, to which, however, the mind soon returns, when left to its own serious reflections.

XCIX.

WHOEVER dwells on what passes within his own mind (and he who does this must have feelings that excite him to it, and perhaps also some of the habits of a "solitary fly") will, I believe, find this conviction to be the result of his attention, viz: that the strongest effect of the highest pleasure which the human mind can receive here on earth, is to awaken in it a sense of its capacity for still higher enjoyments.— Those of this life, then, may be considered

as little more than excitements of our wishes and hopes.*

C.

How comprehensive and how exactly suited to our nature and situation here,

* For what earthly enjoyments are without alloy? and what but unalloyed enjoyments can perfectly satisfy the mind?

We may be content with what we enjoy here: we may say that we are satisfied with it, and may "satisfy ourselves:" but does this feeling perfectly accord with the nature of our minds? and should we feel that content, if it had no reference to futurity?

But this is the result (as I have said elsewhere) of serious, and, if you will, of deep reflection; and of an advertence of the mind to what passes within itself, which it is by no means (generally speaking) in the habit of: there is plenty of room, therefore, for the occupations and amusements of life, without having recourse (comparatively speaking) to "levity and vanity."

To what is said above, it may be added, that there is (in feeling bosoms) a constant sigh, "drawn," as Young well observes (in the Night Thoughts, Night the Seventh) alike "by the cottager and king," for a peace of mind, which this world cannot give, and which therefore can only be expected in a state where it meets with no obstructions: and this, not the peace of insensibility, not the dead repose of "abhorred annihilation," (Do. Night 7) but a peace, which the soul is conscious of its enjoyment of, and which, therefore, must require the utmost perfection of all its faculties to be enjoyed.

and to our hopes of futurity, is that precept of St. Paul, "Be not weary in well-doing!"

CL.

WE may (and must) sow and plant, but we cannot ensure the increase. We must put our hands to the plough, and our shoulders (when necessary) to the wheel, but we cannot be sure of the success of our efforts. On what then are we to depend for that success? On probability?—But is that a dependence? On the nature of things?—Is that an efficient cause? Well then, we must take our chance—but what is chance? No, there is but one source of trust and confidence; if our expectations (formed as they are from the fallible suggestions of our own minds) from that source fail us in one point, they will be made up in another; and the very failures

may lead to higher and more important accomplishments.

CII.

How differently do things appear to us, when we pay attention to them, and when we do not ! And how much do our opinions depend upon the disposition of our minds !

CIII.

IN youth all is gaiety and elasticity ; as age advances, these of course decrease ; but what the body loses, the mind, if properly regulated, gains : for if what may be called the animal enjoyments of life are great in youth, the rational are still greater in old age ; the mind then dwells more on its own sensations and perceptions, and knows better how

to appreciate them* and the higher objects for which they were formed, to direct them to the source from whence they proceed, and in which they are destined ultimately to terminate; for to what else do, or can, our serious contemplations lead us?

CIV.

THE triumphs of vice are but temporary: why? because it contains within itself the seeds of its own destruction. For this reason amongst others (of which it is perhaps one of the chief) the “gates of hell will not prevail against Christianity.”

* The mind cannot know its own powers 'till it is urged to the exertion of them; and this must sometimes be done by adversity: for which, therefore, the knowledge which the mind acquires of its powers, may be considered as some compensation, in the satisfaction which that knowledge gives, and in still more material points that are connected with it.

CV.

“OUR Father”—What an interesting appellation ! What protection may we not expect from our Creator, when he authorises us to address him by a title so dear to men’s interests and affections ! “Which art in heaven.”—God is omnipresent, but there may be in some part of the universe a more peculiar display of his majesty and glory, and wherever that is, it is Heaven.—“Hallowed be thy name!”—and well may it be hallowed, and never should it be profaned, nor “taken in vain.”---And may “thy kingdom come, and thy will be done!”--“Forgive us our trespasses,” &c.

Perhaps we may say, that it is for man to forget, and for God to forgive. Men’s forgiveness of injuries seems often to consist in their forgetting them, that is, in their losing the sense of the injury

done ; but in the Divine mind (if I may so venture to speak) "mercy must temper justice." It may, indeed, do so in man, but it is then an effort, at least when the injury is of a private nature. We may forgive so as to suppress all desire of retaliation, and even return good for evil (as indeed we are commanded to do); but when our opinion of a person is affected by injuries done us, or by his conduct towards us, the impression must remain, unless something occurs to counterbalance it. In the Divine nature, we may conceive the attributes of justice and mercy* to exist together, but we cannot conceive how

* "A God all mercy, is a God unjust."

(*Night Thoughts, Night 4.*)

"Can we conceive a disregard in Heaven
What the worst perpetrate, or best endure ?

* * * * *
If so, for what strange ends were mortals made !
The worst to wallow, and the best to weep !

* * * * *
Eternity, struck off from human hope,
(I speak with truth, but veneration too)
Man is a monster, 'the reproach of Heaven.'

(*Ibid, Night 7.*)

they temper each other relatively to man. In the human mind there is a succession of ideas, which displace, and for a time at least, efface each other; but in the divine mind, we cannot suppose any such to take place.

In this and other injunctions, as well as in our prayers for the Divine assistance in the fulfilment of them, an effort on our part is supposed and enjoined, towards a perfection which must be our ulterior object (for what else would stimulate or influence us?), as we cannot attain it here.

CVI.

If the loss of worldly enjoyments makes us grieve, the possession of them must often (when we think seriously, at least) make us tremble; not so much from the fear of losing them, but (far

more) from the sense of the responsibility they lay us under.*

CVII.

“TRIBUTATION worketh patience, patience experience, and experience hope.”

St. Paul's Epis. to the Rom. ch. iv. ver. 3, 4.

CVIII.

Our opinion of our fellow creatures should be a mixed sentiment, neither too severe, nor too lenient; and our conduct towards them should be the result of it; and all our observation of

* “Is Heaven tremendous in its frowns? most sure;
And in its favors formidable too!
Its favors here are trials; not rewards:
A call to duty, not discharge from care.”
(*Night Thoughts, Night I.*)

others should have for its end the correction of ourselves.

The proper way of being severe, is *se vere judicando*.

CIX.

WE sometimes say, (and we do not say it satirically or ironically) that such a person is "too good to live in this world;" a case which probably never has been, nor ever will be realised; but it shews that we have an idea of a degree of virtue superior to any that the purposes of this world require, and which perhaps is in some measure in opposition to them; it is therefore a confession (in a manner involuntary) of our belief of a future state of existence.* Perhaps my reader will say, Who does not feel that?

* "A good man, and an angel! these between
How thin the barrier! What divides their fate?
Perhaps a moment; or perhaps a year;

CX.

WHOEVER has feelings, and considers them, will know how necessary they are to the formation of opinion. But our feelings are apt to mislead us, and are sometimes at variance with reason. Does the right exercise of reason then require the absence of feeling?—or does it not rather require a due mixture of both, and as well their concurrence, as a counteraction of one by the other, varied according to the nature of the case?

There is no conviction more complete

Or if an age, it is a moment still ;
A moment, or eternity's forgot."

(*Night Thoughts, Night 3.*)

"To triumph in existence, his alone,
And his alone triumphantly to think
His true existence is not yet begun."

(*Ibid, Night 8.*)

" ' Oh let me die his death'—all nature cries.
' Then live his life'—all nature falters there."

(*Ibid, Night 5.*)

than that which is inspired by our feelings, nor indeed can there be any that is complete unless an impression is made upon them. This appears evidently to be the meaning of the Italian Proverb, which ends with "*muovere e vittoria.*"*

How is conviction produced? And what is necessary for that purpose? Is not the imperfection of our knowledge, and the varied degrees of intelligence among us, necessary for the freedom of our agency?† Does not the sense of our imperfection necessarily induce a sense of the imperfection of the demonstrations we are capable of forming? Relative truths may only admit of relative

* "*In segnare e cosa di necessita ;
Dilettare e cosa di suavita :
Ma muovere e vittoria.*"

To instruct may be necessary, and to amuse may be pleasing; but the whole man is gained when his feelings are moved, and his affections won.

† As a more determined rate (if the word is a proper one) of knowledge and intellect among mankind, and on a higher scale, might perhaps have a more determined influence on their opinions and conduct.

The limited state of our knowledge may allow more room for our feelings to act: and we may be pretty sure that it is proportioned to our responsibility.

proof, but in fact, those truths may be real, though we only know them as relative. What is reality, and how far is it distinguishable from mere relation?

CXI.

IN reasoning upon natural subjects I believe there must be a mixture of metaphysics to direct our search after truth. How much will experimental philosophers allow of this? If we cannot resolve every thing into natural causes, something must be referred to the immediate will of the Supreme Cause—indeed every thing.—Does not this lead us into metaphysics? Natural causes, however, are the proper objects of research in experimental philosophy, though our admission of them should be tempered with a reference to higher agency: but the “*nec Deus intersit, nisi dignus vindice nodus*” will proba-

bly withhold philosophers from any metaphysical reasoning, while they have any hope of solving their questions in a more intelligible* (as we think at least) and conclusive way, and also of acquiring for themselves the satisfaction and the merit of the solution. If they carry this too far, however, they may find it will end in defeat and disappointment.

CXII.

WE are apt to imagine that we have a full knowledge of what is familiar to

* This is not meant to lay any blame upon natural philosophers, of whom it is a sufficient justification to say, that an immediate reference to Supreme Power would be in itself an abandonment of all further enquiry, which may be still carried on without losing sight of that ultimate reference. This will secure them from any "defeat and disappointment," as being the most satisfactory conclusion they can come to, and what all their enquiries should tend to, and must end in.

"The world's a system of theology,
Read by the greatest strangers to the schools :
If honest, learn'd ; and sages o'er a plough."
(*Night Thoughts*, Night 7.)

our observation, not considering how superficial that observation is : and consequently how imperfect is all our knowledge.

CXIII.

A DUE attention to possibility and probability, and to the evidences on which the latter is founded (the former needs or admits of none, but the very sufficient one of a reference to Supreme Power) will be of much use in guiding our belief as well of things beyond, as of those within, our comprehension.

CXIV.

CONCLUSIONS from partial reasoning often (perhaps always) make more difficulties than they remove.

CXV.

It would perhaps be as impossible for the mind to receive the doctrines of Christianity, when simply offered to it without the evidence that supports them,* as it is for it to reject them, when

* In considering the mission, incarnation, and death of our Saviour, the mind is confounded, and the strongest intellect totally at a loss to conceive what appears so opposite to all the ideas we are inclined to form to ourselves of the majesty of the Divine nature. But this difficulty, insuperable as it may be, we are under no necessity, and can have no reasonable inducement, to attempt the solution of, when we attend to the evidence which supports the narration of this most wonderful event, and which we find both in the Old and New Testament, but particularly in the latter, though the former is a most powerful part of the great chain of it: evidence which must in a manner enforce our belief, and prepare our minds for a grateful reception of what has, with such inconceivable bounty and benevolence, been done for us. We then submissively acknowledge the truth and the excellence of the Christian doctrines, and are (or ought to be) thankful for that belief which has thus been authorised, and, as is said before, enforced upon us. But this must suppose a previous disposition to make a proper use of our reason, in examining what it can comprehend, and in the conclusions which it draws from that examination.

The arguments urged respecting the necessity of an atonement to satisfy the justice of God, are indeed answerable, but, from our want of greater and more general comprehension, cannot perhaps be perfectly satisfactory

that evidence is fairly and thoroughly examined.* How strongly this calls for our attention to them !

CXVI.

(*Southey's Life of Wesley*, vol. 2, p. 143.)

WHETHER there is or is not a future state after this life is over, it is no matter, except as to the enjoyments or sufferings of this life, when or how† an end

to our minds : there is therefore, a double obligation upon us to restrict our consideration to what is within our comprehension. To search for further satisfaction, is only to court the disappointment of it, and consequently an opposite result.

* Was it not for this, that evidence would not have been given.

What we cannot comprehend, we cannot be meant to examine with a view to comprehension ; but we are not the less bound to believe it, on grounds that are within our comprehension.

† Except when we accelerate our own destruction : for in that case we at least run the risque of future responsibility. And how different must be the feelings of a man who dies in that manner, from those of one who dies in the discharge of his duty ! which every one may do, who lives agreeably to the precepts of the gospel.

“ I grant the deed

Is madness : but the madness of the heart,
And what is that ? our utmost bound of guilt.”

(*Night Thoughts*, Night 5.)

is put to our existence here ; if there is no future state, an end is put at once to joy and sorrow, pain and pleasure, and no reward follows to virtue, no punishment to vice, no compensation for suffering, no retribution for commissions or omissions. But if, as we must believe, there is a future state of existence, the mode of termination of our existence here, and the state of it while it lasts, is as nothing in comparison with what may, and as our reason and our feelings, in accord with the information we have received, will tell us, *will* follow it. The suspense* in which, with all the assurances that we may or can obtain, we

* Whatever incertitude there may be in our expectations of a future state, must arise chiefly, I apprehend, from the incapacity of their nature to admit of a complete demonstration, or rather of our intelligence to receive it : but the strength of the evidence in their favor, and its operation on our reason and our feelings, will gradually increase, and finally amount to a perfect conviction, by the attention we pay to it ; and this excitement and effect is the best assurance we can have, that those expectations are well-founded. (See note to page 76, &c.)

Northbrooke, near Exeter, March 23, 1821.

are kept here in regard to this, is an excitement both to our hopes and fears; and will, if we think and feel, have a consequent effect on our conduct.

CXVII.

Part of a letter sent to the Gentleman's Magazine, Feb. 20, 1820, and inserted in it in April.

WE are sensible of (and we are, or ought to be, grateful for) our superiority over the irrational part of the creation: but we are also sensible (as I think we may be allowed to be, in considering the limits of our knowledge) of the inferiority of our faculties to what we may reasonably suppose are possessed by beings superior to us. Is not the latter sense (which seems the dawning* of a

* Man has an idea of perfection in his mind, which he cannot find the reality of upon earth. For what would this idea have been given to him, if he was never and no where to find it realised? It was given to direct, to stimulate him: and for what, but that it may have its consummation elsewhere? "Be ye therefore perfect," &c.

brighter light) a strong ground for the hope of future exaltation? For why else was it given us? Many other arguments might here be adduced; for this comparison of ours with the brute species, makes but a part of what the admirable "Night Thoughts" call "Reason's precious dower,"* in the investigation of which, "proofs rise on proofs" in favor of an expectation so inseparable from the best feelings of our nature. Young's enforcement of them indeed, I think, authorises the climax to which he ascends, when he makes the immortality of the soul and the existence of a Supreme Being correlative with each other (puts them on the same ground of certitude): "If man's immortal, there's a God in Heaven."† For without the one,

* "Reason's precious dower," is considered by Dr. Young, as consisting in suffering, in a sense of that suffering, and in the hope of a future compensation for it.

† "Or own the soul immortal, or blaspheme."

(*Night Thoughts*, *Night 7*.)

"Be ye sure that the Lord he is God: it is he that

what solid or permanent interest can man have in the other? And when, in concurrence with all the suggestions of our reason and our feelings, we have the assurance that is given us in the sacred writings, the truth of which is irrefragable when fairly examined, what further proof can be wanting? If, however, still farther is desired, the very existence of that desire, (I speak to those who can think and feel) unsatisfied as it is, and (for the best reasons) must remain so in our present state, may be urged as a proof that it will at some time be satisfied; that is, it will be lost in the certain possession of its object; or to express myself still better, in the

hath made us, and not we ourselves: we are his people and the sheep of his pasture." (100th Psalm.)

Be ye sure also, that he who hath made us, and whose people we are, is the God "not of the dead, but of the living;" and that, therefore, as the souls of "Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob" still live, so shall our souls also survive the grave: and the sheep of his pasture here, shall have an everlasting pasture hereafter.

Bristol Hotwells, March 8, 1821.

words of Mr. Mason, in his beautiful elegy on the death of Lady Coventry :

“ Eternity, by all or hop’d or fear’d,
Shall be by all or suffer’d or enjoy’d.”

CXVIII.

THE interest that we take in reading Young’s Night Thoughts, seems to depend most on the want we feel of those consolations and encouragements which his arguments in favour of the expectation of a future state so powerfully afford.*

* The Night Thoughts are equally full of feeling and of argument, of the most animated expression, and the strongest reasoning ; and on what a subject !

But read—read, ye who have taste and feeling, and wish to gratify both : Taste ? say you—yes taste ; for if feeling is excited—and what are Young’s redundancies, and, if you will, his inequalities ? his waste of argument, yes, wasted, if addressed “ *surdis auribus*,” or even his sample of metaphors, of which one, speaking of galley slaves, “ who plough the wintry wave, and reap despair,” is terribly impressive.—“ Folly sings six, while nature points at twelve,” is ludicrous. But these are spots, let me say, in the sun. “ High to bear my brow, and drink

CXIX.

*Reflections suggested by the view of Francesco Molas'
Picture of Hagar, Ishmael, and the Angel.*

THE narrations of the bible must either be considered as true, or else as ingenious ways of accounting for the events that have happened on earth, and for the origin of nations, &c. ; or they must be considered altogether as fictions, imagined to answer particular purposes, or from caprice, &c. Of their truth, their simplicity is one (besides

the spirit of the golden day, and triumph in existence."—Is not this to "mount upon a wing of fire?" and other passages, in seeking which other treasures will unfold themselves. No, Pope—you had more correctness, more polish ; but you had not this spirit—no, you had it not—Young's poetry was wanted to animate us ; and it does animate us, in referring us to the bible, of which it may be called a noble paraphrase.

An old clergyman, (Mr. Montague, of Dorsetshire) said that he had laid aside all his books, except his bible and Horace ; why not add the Night Thoughts ? Shall we shrink from them ? No, embrace them, and they will warm us, warm us into new life, of which they are the heralds, for they speak the language of the gospel.

others) great evidence ;* and it does not very well accord with that ingenuity which is implied in the second supposition, and for which there does not appear to have been the requisite means, or any occasion, at the time when the history was probably composed. Nor can we suppose that they were mere fictions imposed upon the credulity of the people, with whose history they were intermixed, and to whose traditions, and even (some of them at least) personal recollections, they must have been referable. If they were a mixture of truth and fiction, the Divine agency recorded

* On my observing to a friend, "how simple and circumstantial the narratives of the scriptures are," he added very properly, "and how expressive;" which perhaps is their strongest characteristic, and as strong an attestation of their truth and divine origin. The observation was suggested by the narrative of the prophet Elisha, Naaman, and Gehazi; and the more we attend to all the circumstances which are connected with the narration of the bible, the more we shall be convinced of their truth, I mean if we fairly attend to them; not with the malignant prejudices and designs of a *Paine*, or spirits of similar mould; his, indeed (poor wretched man!) was the extreme of infidelity, shewing itself in all its naked deformity, without the veil with which their's is sometimes covered: and we have seen the fruits of it in his life and death.

in them, (which in that case we must suppose to have been the fictitious part) must also have been matter of appeal to recollection ; and if so, how could the Jews be made to believe they had seen and remembered what in reality had never happened ? To suppose that the whole, i. e. the historical part, and all, was fiction, and intended for the use and reception of future nations, is far too wild and absurd for a moment's admission : it supposes a previous knowledge of the existence of those nations, and of every thing relating to them, and of the whole train of events that took place afterwards ; or else an influential power over them ; and in either case it must imply a reach of intellect far more than human ; it ascribes to the original composers a power and knowledge overruling all human agency and casual-ity, and gives

“ Divinitus illis

Ingenium, et rerum fato prudentia major.”

What then becomes of the supposition of human ingenuity ?

CXX.

GENERAL conclusions should never be formed, without some attention at least to the details which must necessarily be connected with them.

CXXI.

A STRONG persuasion may be equal to conviction; and it may be a necessary substitute for it, in cases where that degree of comprehension cannot be had, which is required to impress a perfect conviction on the mind, but where there is (as I believe there may be) as strong a call upon the mind to give its assent, when the case is fairly examined, as there would be if the comprehension were more compleat. This, I believe, will be instanced in cases where the ad-

dress is made, both to the reason and the feelings, or at least where their united operation is required to form a just judgment; as in religion. The union of both may often be necessary; for there is a great difference between assenting to a truth, and feeling it.

Many things indeed are true in part, and cease to be so when they are pushed beyond a certain point. To what indeed will not the “ne quid nimis” extend? We may be “righteous overmuch; but a partial signification is here to be given to the word “righteous.”*

CXXII.

THE great variety of opinions on almost all subjects seems to afford that

* As being exemplified in its excess; to which our feelings may easily carry it, when not tempered by judgment.—May not Horace be quoted here?

“Insani sapiens nomen ferat, æquus iniqui,
Ultra quam satis est, virtutem si petat ipsam.”

Lib. 1. Epist. 6.

opportunity for discussion, and for the exercise of the powers of the mind that they require.

CXXIII.

THERE seems to be an odd struggle between the mind's sense of its powers, and of its impotence, or at least of the imperfection of its powers.

CXXIV.

OF how many things does our opinion depend on the light in which we view them !

CXXV.

So much you said, so much you wrote, so much you thought, and so much you

felt. Is it not so, ye who speak, who write, who think, and feel?

CXXVI.

“A wit’s a feather, and a chief’s a rod ;
An honest man’s the noblest work of God.”

THESE lines of Pope have been criticised, as being a sacrifice or a comparative depreciation of those endowments in which he himself excelled, and which may be thought to constitute the highest excellence of man’s nature, in the preference given to a quality which may be possessed by men of the meanest abilities. But it should be considered, that to be an honest man, in the fullest sense of term (in which it is fair to suppose that Pope meant it) implies more than a mere exemption from the disposition to rob or cheat ; that the aversion from doing a dishonest action of any kind requires an assemblage of qualities to secure it,

beyond what could be done by mere pride, or the fear of shame. These latter may be consistent enough with a disposition to cheat the world, or ourselves: to be perfectly honest and just to both, requires the highest degree of moral excellence, and in such a measure, as can only be filled by religion. Let a man be as generous, kind, and amiable in his manners as he will, he may conceal within himself some qualities which, though the world may overlook or pardon them for the sake of his social merits, may not meet with an equal acquittal in the sight of Heaven. If any tribunal on earth can decide this, it must be that of his own conscience. In the judgment of the world, too, we may observe the distinction made between what induces us to say, "I believe that man is honest," and "I believe that is an honest man." The latter is far more comprehensive and expressive than the former, and such is probably

the "honest man" that was pointed at by Pope.

CXXVII.

THE proverb "Every man for himself, and God for us all," seems to have much the same meaning and spirit as Juvenal's "*nullum numen abest, si sit prudentia*:" and both, properly understood, and with the restrictions they require, are right.

CXXVIII.

POPE's Essay on Man is, I think, much more valuable and instructive on account of the many passages in it which the events of life and our own reflections are continually bringing to "our breasts and bosoms," than taken altogether as a systematic poem; for as such it is imper-

fect and uninstrusive, or rather, it is calculated to mislead, if not understood with proper restrictions. The world, as Pope says, is truly "a mighty maze, but not without a plan : " and there are parts of that plan, which are apparent to a reflecting mind : but to unravel the whole, or even the main and higher parts of it, must be a vain attempt. For all the information we can receive of these, we must refer to the scriptures.

Such passages in Pope's Essay as,
 " There's not a bliss the human heart can find,
 But some way leans and hearkens to mankind : "

And,

" If then to all men happiness was meant,
 God in externals could not place content : "

And many others, are highly beautiful, and speak strongly to the reason and the feelings.

Perhaps it may be said of many parts of this poem, that the thoughts are such as may appear obvious enough to a thinking mind, but they very probably

might not have occurred to it, if they had not been suggested and enforced by the beauty of the poetry : and we may say the same of many points of morality, which appear to us now plain enough, and not to be missed, but which we are indebted in part for our knowledge of, and attention to, to the scriptures. Every thing, when known, appears easy and familiar to our intelligence.

CXXIX.

WE may sometimes have a strong and well-founded sense of the rectitude of our opinions, without being able fully to express or explain them ; but then we should be careful not to deceive ourselves ; for there are various ways of doing that.

CXXX.

*Ex Lactantii, Divin. Institut. Epitome, cap. 29,
Malum cur Deus patiatur.*

“QUÆRO utrumve virtus bonum sit, aut malum? Negari non potest, quin bonum: si bonum est virtus, malum est igitur e contrario vitium. Si vitium ex eo malum est, quia virtutem impugnat; et virtus ex eo bonum est, quia vitium affligit: ergo non potest virtus sine vitio consistere, et si vitium sustuleris, virtutis merita tollentur; nec enim potest ulla fieri sine hoste victoria. Ita fit, ut bonum sine malo esse non possit.”—(Et seq. usque ad capitis finem.)

Sic Horatius, “Virtus est vitium fugere, et sapientia prima stultitia caruisse.”

“Cum de hominis summo bono quaeritur, tale constitui debet, ut id ad hominem solum pertineat, deinde, ut ani-

mi sit proprium, postremo, ut virtute quærat. — (*Lact. Epist. cap. 33.*)

“ Si virtus, quæ bona omnia terrena contemnit, mala patientissime perfert, ipsamque mortem pro officio suscipit, sine præmio esse non potest, quid superest, nisi merces ejus immortalitas sola sit? ” — (*Id. cap. 35.*)

“ Sapientia* non in sermonis ornatu, sed in corde atque sensu. ” — (*Ibid.*)



CXXXI,

How much may a single word contain in itself, allowing a little play upon it : for instance :

Beseem—be what you seem, and seem what you be : if right in both, you

* “ Sapientia,” &c.—The truth of this is the more evident, as wisdom is very frequently evinced by the feelings and the conduct which they influence, where the powers of expression are defective, or at least very inadequate. And, on the contrary, eloquence is no proof of wisdom ; the source of which lies higher and deeper than human language can reach.

are as it beseems you to be. To be right, and consistent in that right, is as much as can well be required ; but for this, how much is required ! The nearer we approach to that standard, the better we are; but how often do the infirmities of our nature make us fall short of it ! “ *Nemo vitiis sine nascitur optimus ille qui minimis urgetur.*” But does this express enough ? What is an exemption from vice, unless the vacancy is filled up by virtue ? We are, then, to give a more extended meaning to “ *vitia*,” and to consider defects as evil propensities, omissions as commissions : but—“ *Virtus est vitium fugere* ;” this makes exemption from vice the effect of exertion, and exertion once begun-----

CXXXII.

THERE may be persons of both sexes who interest us greatly, without being objects of our esteem and confidence

we have therefore to guard against the interest we are inclined to take in them, that it may not turn (in various ways) to our disadvantage. Attachment requires confidence, which should be founded in esteem. Where this is wanting, compassion is perhaps the warmest sentiment we should indulge. Men have been blamed for not shewing a return of kindness to the poor females whom they have seduced ; but the fault (or crime rather) is in the seduction. Continuance of affection requires something more than the passion (even when it is of a better kind than mere lust) which led to the seduction.—The giving way to that passion and its excesses is a wrong of another and a higher kind than merely as an injury done to the female who suffered herself to be seduced. The greatest violation is that of our responsibility.*

* “ While we learn to fence with public guilt,
 Full oft we feel its foul contagion too,
 If less than heavenly virtue be our guard.”
(Night Thoughts, Night 8.)

CXXXIII.

WHAT a mixture of good and bad, of truth and error, there is in the affairs and the minds of men ! shewing itself particularly when they get out of the common road of life, and engage in higher, deeper, or more complicated pursuits. In the former they are kept in order, and their conduct is regulated by their own common sense, and the general opinion and observation of those around them ; in the latter they may

“ Virtue, for ever frail, as fair, below,
 Her tender nature suffers in the crowd,
 Nor touches on the world, without a stain.
 The world’s infectious ; few bring back at eve,
 Immaculate, the manners of the morn.”

But

(*Ibid*, *Night 5*.)

“ By strong guilt’s most violent assault
 Conscience is but disabled, not destroyed.”

With remains of power, then, more to torment than to reform. But this is its last and lowest state ; let it not be anticipated ; or if anticipated, only to be prevented, while an hour of the “day” remains ; but let us dread the *last*.

soon be placed out of the reach (in some degree at least) and influence of these checks, the operation of which is weakened or diverted by a variety of temptations, perplexities, ambiguities, &c. : examples of these abound in the moral world, in all matters where religion or politics, or the intermixture of these, which must inevitably happen, are concerned. (See Southey's *Life of Wesley*, vol. 2, p. 304, 318, et passim.)

It should be added to this, that the instances must be sought for in individuals whose situation in life, and above all, whose character and endowments, render them liable to, and qualify them for, these deviations from the common path of it.

CXXXIV.

IN reading some accounts of the Methodists and their doctrines, one is

almost tempted to imagine that either a reasonable conduct and discourse are inconsistent with holiness, or else that what we call and think reasonable, is not really so.* But the Methodists (as they are described in Southey's *Life of Wesley*) do not seem disposed to consult their reason ; they wait for inspiration. It must however, I believe, be allowed, that the Methodists have in some cases (perhaps many) done good, particularly in such cases as that of the colliers of Kingswood, near Bristol, &c. and in reclaiming many individual profligates ; but it is a good alloyed with, and in some respects founded upon, delusion ; which must be the case, if the doctrines of the Methodists are erroneous ; and what reasonable man that considers their enthusiastic notions, however supported by the ingenious arguments (sophistical as they are) of

* That is, if we give the Methodists more credit for soundness of judgment than they surely deserve.

John Wesley (see Southey's *Life of him*, vol. 2, pa. 178, and others), but will pronounce them to be erroneous, and not drawn from any fair or reasonable interpretation of the scriptures? The errors, however, and the arguments in defence of them, seem often to come so near the truth (of which indeed they may be only exaggerations) that they are the more calculated to persuade, delude, and even, when disapproved of, to suspend rejection.---In page 179 (vol. 2) a distinction is made between those who are "previously holy" &c. and those who are perfectly opposite; and "belief in Christ" is stated to be "the free gift of God," bestowed only on the second description of persons (not being wanted by the first) in consequence of their having "a sense of mere sin and misery, without any merit or goodness of their own." The great danger of this seems to be in their being induced to wait for the "free gift"

without making any effort to obtain it; or to have this "sense of sin and misery" excited in them, without connecting those evils with any violation of the rules of morality, or considering the observance of those rules as any means of obtaining the Divine favor. If they do make these connections, it must be by their own better judgment, and not from any instructions they receive from the preacher, but rather from an ability to see through the delusions that his doctrine is calculated to lead them into, and to sift the truth from the errors with which it is mixed and alloyed. "Veritas magna est, et prævalebit" must, I think, be often evinced in the influence which sensible, clear-headed, and reasonable men have over those who want those qualities: this influence may perhaps be slow, yet sure.

(Southey's Life of Wesley, vol. 2, p. 79 and 80.)

All the direction here appears to be to one object. If that object was a

proper one, and properly followed, well and good. This seems to be the great question. But how many will say, that there was more of cunning than of sound policy (so nearly connected with honesty) in this: however, whether they were, in acting thus, the “children of this world” (indignant as the Methodists would be to hear themselves so called) or the “children of light” (not merely of their own light) their conduct seems to have been consistent with its end. But how are we to distinguish error from fraud, or enthusiasm from imposture? or, in fine, to analyse the combination which there might perhaps be of them all? And where is the line to be drawn between hypocrisy and self-delusion?*

* When we are inclined to impute the vice of hypocrisy, we should not forget that it may possibly be only the weakness of inconsistency. We may impute to insincerity, what in fact is more owing to want of judgment. But these appear to be effects only which must be attributed to their causes; for all our impulses must spring from some prior motive, and every habit must have its beginning. The source then of all this mischief is probably in that common misleader of human judgment, vanity.

“*Humanum est errare*,”* certainly; and also, *decipere*; and (how often!) to mistake error for truth. Is not Methodism liable to this reproach, that the perversions of it by its followers are only to be guarded against by nice distinctions? Perhaps this will be said of Christianity; but it contains all the preventions of perversion within itself, and if the perversion is made, it must be wilfully† and by partial and unfair interpretation.

The exaggerations of enthusiasm appear to be inevitable, as being natural to minds disposed to give way to their feelings on subjects the most capable of exciting them, and in which they are the most likely to get loose from the controuling power of reason. We may presume that these errors will be recti-

* If “*Humanum est errare*” is true, what mercy may not error hope for, through the mediation of Christ, when it is not mixed with wilful perversion!

† Or at least in opposition to sound judgment. Should we not, then, sometimes revise our principles?

fied in a future state, in which the strength of our passions, and the sense of our wants and weakness will no longer impel* us to seek comfort and support from a source of which our estimation here is so apt to be influenced by what those feelings suggest to our minds. In a future state all will (we may hope) be enlightened and purified, and other and better feelings, unmixed with the alloys of our present state, will direct our views to those objects, which here we “see, as through a glass (the glass of our imperfect faculties) darkly.”

* Or rather, will no longer mislead us in seeking that comfort and support. A fuller knowledge of that “source” will give us a reliance far more to be depended upon.

“The dread path once trod,
Heav’n lifts its everlasting portals high,
And bids the pure in heart behold their God.

MASON.

Who (it may be asked) are the “pure in heart. Those whose hearts are “made clean,” and in whom “a right spirit is renewed.” And can we do that ourselves, without assistance? And is not that assistance promised to those who exert their efforts.

“The next day he observed that ‘our Lord’s sermon on the mount was one pretty remarkable precedent of field-preaching :’ and he adds ‘I suppose there were churches at that time also ;’ a remark which first indicates a hostile feeling towards the Establishment, for it has no other meaning.” (Southey’s *Life of Wesley*, vol. 1, p. 244.)

‘This hostile feeling, I think, would naturally accompany, or at least follow, the adoption of the practice. It will, perhaps, be said, that the sermon on the mount was, as well as the rest of our Saviour’s doctrines, hostile to the Establishment then subsisting : but, granting this, does it follow that all opposition to, or dissent from, succeeding Establishments are justified by it, founded as the Establishments are on Christianity as first promulgated, and dependent (in some degree at least) as the deviations from it will be, on the

caprice or passions of those who thus deviate ?*

The enthusiasm of the Methodists, &c. leads one to suppose that perfect self-satisfaction is only to be found in self-delusion; and so indeed it probably is; for how can perfect self-satisfaction be consistent with the frailties and imperfections† of our nature, or with our dependence on the mercies of God, and the merits of our Redeemer? Who that knows himself (if only in part) will expect ever to be perfectly satisfied with himself? The Methodists, indeed, seem to mix that feeling with a reliance on higher assistance and protection; but they are extravagant in their expectation of this, and in fact (in respect to their estimation of what passes within them-

* To which, however, they choose to trust, without any diffidence of themselves, or deference to the opinions of others; at least the first "deviators" (sectarists) appear to be so influenced; should we not therefore trace these errors to the motives of their founders?

† i. e. our sense of them.

selves) look to the same end through the same means, that is, in self-persuasion, or more properly, self-delusion.*

CXXXV.

"I COME not to send peace on earth (or on this land, Judæa, as Mr. Bryant renders it) but a sword."

To what Mr. Bryant has observed on this passage of the New Testament, I think it may be added, that we are too apt to apply our Saviour's words, and other passages of the New Testament, to our own times and those that may succeed them. Many indeed may be so applicable; but we should recollect that in laying the foundation of his religion, our Saviour would most

* Must rigidity of principle in human or divine matters, be inevitably carried into bigotry? Is laxity of opinion inseparable from liberality? or are bigotry and laxity only the extremes of the others?

"Auream quisquis mediocritatem," &c.

But where is this middle line? is it not a fluctuating one?

probably deliver himself in language the most intelligible and impressive ; and what related to the country and the times his disciples lived in, or to the times which were soon to follow, would of course be the most so. The above appears to be proved by our construction of the passage ; for in applying it to the times which have passed since our Saviour's mission, and to our own, and those which are soon to follow ours, we seem to be guided by what is most intelligible to us, and most interesting. It may also be observed, that our ideas of the importance of our Saviour's mission, (important as indeed it was) and of his dignity and the knowledge he possessed, may make us put a more general and remote construction on his words, than (as I said before) his object in laying the foundation of a religion which was gradually to increase and be diffused, appears to require or admit of.

The doctrines and precepts of our religion were meant for us, but also for those to whom they were delivered, and of course in terms that would be adapted to their intelligence and feelings. As they were delivered, they have been handed down to us. Our reception of, and habitual attention to them (where they make the proper impression) have interested us equally in them, and such will (progressively) be the effect wherever they are received.



CXXXVI.

[WHAT follows was partly suggested by the reading of "Christie's Worship of the Elements," and "Maurice on the Ruins of Babylon," &c. in which the reasoning and inferences drawn have been called "fanciful," a term which, with all that it implies, seems to me to be hardly consistent with candour or justice. Some respect at least may be due to the analogies they trace; and this for the reasons given below.]

Connections and analogies are more or less immediate and obvious, or remote and indistinct : it depends upon the judgment to determine how far they are to be trusted to, and what conclusions are to be drawn from them ; if the obscurity of some subjects will not admit of the same light being thrown upon them as upon others that are less obscure, we must not for that reason reject the light that they are capable of receiving: one will be in proportion to the other ; and perhaps may operate as powerfully in the weaker, as in the stronger cases ; in the former, however, they may derive their force from accumulation, which puts them on a par with the latter.*

* As (perhaps) in the distinction between presumptive and positive evidence.

CXXXVII.

“Hodie est tricesima Sabbata, vintu
Curtis Judæis oppedere? Nulla mihi, inquam,
Religio est : at mi ; sum paulo infirmior, unus
Multorum.”* (*Hor. Lib. 1, Sat. 9.*)

This appears to shew that the Romans
had vague and floating ideas of religion,

* It seems to me not at all improbable that “Fuscus Aristius” (of whom Horace speaks with so much regard in this satire) had paid considerable attention to the doctrines and sacred books of the Jews, and that he had a degree of respect for them.

The mere unwillingness to give scandal to the Jews themselves was, I think, hardly sufficient to account for the respect he seems to pay to their religion (possibly indeed in common with other religions) in his “at mi,” &c. especially when we consider the impression which the sublimity of it, &c. was likely to make on a man who was inclined and able to pay due attention to it. This surely would induce him to make the comparison in its favor. A step further, in succeeding times, might have made a Christian of him.

I think a man who was Horatio “carus” was not likely to be merely “unus multorum.” He would have something to distinguish him from the “οἱ πολλοί.”

If it is objected that Fuscus Aristius gave his “at mi,” &c. as an ironical reason (“male salsus”) for leaving Horace “sub cultro,” still I think there is enough in the passage to make the above conjectures probable, agreeing too, as it does, with the general practice of the Romans. What regards Fuscus Aristius, must be left to the ideas

which led them to pay respect to modes of it very different from their own (for such was the Jewish religion from the Heathen Mythology) and it will, perhaps, account for that extended toleration which they gave to every other religion which did not directly interfere with the practice of their own, as the Christian religion afterwards did, and thereby drew upon its professors the severest persecutions. Those who adopted the opinions of any particular sect of philosophers, might be said to have a sort of code of their own, among which it appears that Horace had chosen the Epicurean---“*Deos didici securum*

we may form of his character ; at any rate he shews a knowledge of the Jewish customs : and I think something may be inferred from Horace's putting the expression of it into his mouth. That expression could hardly have *ridicule* for its sole object.

Horace's regard for Fuscus Aristius is still more strongly expressed in the epistle addressed to him, Ep. 10, Lib. I.—“*pene gemelli*,” except “*in re una*,” and “*vetuli notique columbi*,” as they are there described to be, we may hope that their mutual admonitions—“*Lætus sorte tua vives sapienter Aristi ; nec me dimittes incastigatum*,” &c. were mutually useful.

agere ævum," &c.---a system which led him to suppose that the Gods did not interfere at all with the concerns of mankind. But what he says in his ode* "Parcus Deorum cultor et infrequens," &c. (a sort of Palinodia) is in direct opposition to this.

CXXXVIII.

HORACE avoit un fonds de bon sens,† qui l'empêchoit de rester toujours attaché au système Epicuréen, et le forçoit enfin "retrorsum vela dare."--- Il pensoit pour lui-même, et il étoit, en conséquence, "nullius addictus jurare in verba magistri," parceque apparemment il ne trouvoit aucun des systèmes philosophiques qui méritoit tout son

* This ode may be considered as an acknowledgment of the agency of a Providence in producing effects and changes that cannot be foreseen or accounted for by human reason.

† The reader is requested to excuse the occasional expression of opinion in (I hardly know why) the French language.

devouement. The line which follows the above, "*Quo me cunque rapit tempestas deferor hospes,*" seems to mean that his opinions were influenced by the circumstances and suggestions of the moment. He had not the doctrines of Christianity, to fix at once his reason and his feelings. Yes, to fix them: for however the needle may be shaken or may vacillate, to that point it will return.---"*Le sacrifice de nos lumieres naturelles, sur ce qui concerne les causes primitives, est-il un si grand sacrifice ? J'en appelle a la bonne foi des philosophes qui ont etudie l'histoire de l'esprit humain. La religion (surtout la Chretienne) ne nous ote pas une de nos connoissances utiles et reelles. Elle affermit celles qui sont chancelantes, et nous en donne que nous n'aurions pas sans elle ; son flambeau s'allume ou celui de la raison s'eteint,*" &c. (*La morale d'Epicure &c. par l'Abbe Batteux, page 128.*) This is admirable, but I think

he might have added, that if the torch of religion guides us, it is as an assistant to, and not as a substitute for our reason;* for to *that* the appeal is made, when the “faith,” for which we are to give a “reason,” is required of us.

CXXXIX.

“Romæ Tibur amem ventosus, Tibure Romam,”

Is one of Horace's confessions: and the same sentiment seems to be expressed by some French author, who says “nous ne sommes heureux que la ou nous ne sommes pas.” This coincides with what Pope says, “Man never is, but always to be blest.” Indeed the enjoyment of happiness seems to require a permanency which, in a state in which all things are fleeting and mutable, cannot be attained. We therefore must

* Those only think the scriptures at variance with reason who do not know how to make a right use of their reason.

look forward to another state for the enjoyment of "that peace which the world cannot give," and which we pray for in our liturgy. The sense of religion with all its due accompaniments, will give as much of it as can be obtained in this world, to counteract and alleviate the numerous obstacles which our search after happiness meets with in it. If any thing will give the "*æquus animus*," which, Horace says, will when possessed make happiness (or at least as much of it as is required for the "*bene vivere*") attainable in any situation, and which, he flattered himself he knew how "*parare sibi*," it is this sense of religion.

CXL.

"*Felices ter et amplius
Quos irrupta tenet Copula, nec malis
Divulsus Querimoniis
Suprema citius solvet amor die.*"

The rogue Horace knew how to preach, however he might practice. Satirist as he was, and licentious as (in some degree at least) he acknowledges himself to be, that he was both an amiable and a moral Poet, his works sufficiently testify. Devoutly religious he was not; but that he knew how “*veneri Deos*” his ode “*Parcus Deorum cultor et infrequens insanientis dum sapientiæ consultus erro, nunc retrorsum,*” &c. &c. is some proof of.

As a poet, Persius has well described him.

“*Omne vafer vitium ridenti Flaccus amico
Tangit, et admissus circum præcordia ludit.*”

In Horace shines complete the poet's art,
To captivate at once the head and heart.*

* In Horace we see quickness of perception, sublimity of imagination, correctness of judgment, the most playful and engaging familiarity, and the greatest happiness of expression. Without entering deeply into, or dwelling long on his subject, but passing rapidly from one to another, he touches the most interesting parts of each, addressing himself “*ridenti amico*,” (and what reader of taste and feeling does he not make a smiling friend of?) making himself feared only by those whose faults or

 CXLI.

———"Ridetque, si mortales ultra
Fas trepidant."

What is the "*ultra fas trepidare*"?

CXLII.

What had Horace in view when he wrote these two lines?

"Nunc versus, et cætera ludicra pono;
Condo et compono quæ mox depromere possim."

Being "*nullius addictus jurare in verba magistri*," he probably would not

follies expose them to the lash of his satire. He has his inequalities, no doubt, and what genius has not? His bow is not always strung, but sometimes relaxed like that of his own Apollo—"neque semper arcum tendit"—But what strength and sublimity in his "*Justum et tenacem propositi virum, &c. &c.—si fractus illabatur orbis, impavidum ferient ruinæ.*" What neatness and elegance (and, I am afraid truth) in "*Ætas parentum, pejor avis, tulit nos nequiores, mox daturos progeniem vitiosiore.*" These are striking instances of his "*Curiosa felicitas*;" if indeed that gives him adequate praise,—"*Quæsitam meritis.*"

have been a very good magister himself; “quo me cunque rapit tempestas,* deferor hospes,” would have been but a bad foundation for a system.

Good common sense, and acuteness of intellect, may prevent us from being led astray by others, but it may require other helps to enable us to find the right road. To chuse those helps properly, is therefore part (and the chief part) of its province.†

Horace’s “acumen ingenii” did the first for him: but what induced him “retrosum vela dare?” Perhaps the sober reasoning of advancing years.



CXLIII.

“Felices ter et amplius,” &c. see page 203.

WHEN we read such sentiments, and

* Shall we construe “tempestas,” the humour of the moment?

† And what better choice can it make than of the Bible?

so expressed, as these ; when we read other sentiments, expressed in a manner equally worthy of their subjects, and those subjects higher and still more interesting (though, after all, what can more nearly touch the human heart, what can more strongly excite its warmest feelings and expressions, than the domestic* enjoyments of life ?) may we not say, that the human faculties, when *well* exercised, have something divine in them ? Yes, yes.—In these and other exhibitions of the best qualities of his nature, man truly shews himself to be made (as he is declared from a source from which nothing but truth can pro-

* Burke is recorded to have said, that when he entered his own house, and mixed with his family, “he left all his cares behind him.” He would not have said, nor have felt this, if he had not found at home an ample compensation for all that troubled, and equivalent for all that interested and engaged him in those cares.

So Akenside, in the Pleasures of Imagination, speaks of

—“The mild majesty of private life,
Where peace with ever-blooming olive crowns,
The gate, where honor’s liberal hands effuse
Unenvied treasures, and the snowy wings
Of innocence and love protect the scene.”

High as the colouring of poetry may be, the picture is drawn from nature.

ceed, to have been made) in the "image" of his Creator.

But—"Felices ter et amplius."—O Horace, did it never suggest itself to you, that this felicity might be continued even after the "suprema dies," or that it might be changed for still higher enjoyments? It might suggest itself; but you had no authority for that declaration. You, perhaps, would have thought that it would be considered only as the flight of a poetical imagination, and that it would rather weaken the effect of that real Elysium of which the only certitude could be upon earth, and which your social and sympathetic feelings made you wish to multiply the enjoyment of, and to make the sense of it an inmate of other bosoms than your own. But your ideas of happiness, or of compensation for the loss of it, could go no farther :* you could do no more

* Horace could have no lively hope that the once *rupta* copula would be restored, or lost in the union of higher

than lament with your friend Virgil, the loss of Quinctilius, and make the

and more general felicity. He could only feel, that while it was "irrupta," it was far to be preferred to the violent and transient enjoyments of "Lydia" and her "puer furens," intermixed with the "immodicæ mero rixæ."

"Lætus in presens" (what? with the "atra comes?") "carpe diem," &c. are Horace's favorite maxims; but he does not omit that "Ille potens sui, lætusque deget, cui licet in diem Dixisse, vixi," &c. &c.—that the "murus aheneus" is "nil conscire sibi, &c.—These are his reliances, or what he endeavours, (and justly) to make so. Thus at least he appears as a poet, and we may hope was as a man. For who that has read Horace does not feel interested in what regards him? who does not personally associate him with the lines that give us so much both of pleasure and instruction?—"Delectando, pariterque monendo." To whom is he not "admissus circum præcordia?"

That Mæcenas called him "dilecte," is a proof that he was in his character what he appears in his writings.

Horace's immoralities seem to have partly resulted from his own disposition, and partly from the manners of the times in which he lived, and in which the lively and ardent feelings of a genius like his had no restraint (or at least not a sufficient one) to keep them within the bounds of virtue and decency, at least what are now considered as such, since the promulgation of a religion which has, as strongly as justly, enjoined the observance of them. But for the sincerity of the virtuous parts of his character which balanced his vices, I think we may very fairly give him credit, on account of the frankness with which he speaks of both: of the latter, in his "mille puellarum, puerorum mille furores"—the addresses of his servant Davus to him, &c. &c.—and of the former (his virtues and other merits) he speaks in a manner that seems fully authorised by his "sume superbiam quæsitam meritis." In short, frankness and just feeling seem to have been the basis of his character, and to have shewn themselves in all his writings; and his advice to his friend Quinctilius to

"*levius fit patientia*" your consolation. You could only tell your friends Postumus and Torquatus, the one that "*Linquenda tellus, et domus, et placens uxor;*" and say to the other, "*Non, Torquate, genus, non te facundia, non te restituet pietas*"—you could not say what would become of the "*Victima nil miserantis orci,*" though your "*splendida Mincs fecerit Arbitria*" may seem to indicate an expectation of retributive justice in a future state: but for this you had little more than poetical authority and natural feeling, assisted, perhaps, by some traditions, drawn from a better source, though sullied with all the corruptions of Paganism.

have been the rule of his own conduct—"recte vivis, si curas esse quod audis." If he had been tried, he would, perhaps, have realised his "*Lando manentem; si celeres quatit pennas, resigno quæ dedit, et mea virtute me involvo, probamque pauperiem sine dote quæro.*"

This would indeed have shewn him to be "*potens sui.*" I think, from what Horace has left us, we may presume to hope that he would not be found the least entitled to mercy, among those who were to be "*judged by their own laws.*"

Replete, however, with corruptions, as Paganism was, it admitted (in some minds at least) an attention to the sentiments of reason and morality, of which our votary of Bacchus and Venus, (to say no worse of him) shews himself capable in various parts of his writings, and must have evinced his sense of them in his "*Noctes Cœnæque Deum*," of which any sensual rites could not well have made a part. "*Solutus legibus insanis*," as every guest was, even the "*mero caluisse virtus*" could not have been carried very far, as it would have disabled them for discussing the "*quod magis ad nos pertinet*," and "*quæ sit natura boni, summumque quid ejus*;" and for enjoying the (partial at least) illustration of it in that most beautiful tale of the two mice.

Even in his amatory odes (as has been shewn in a passage already quoted) Horace now and then breaks out in purer and more refined sentiments, of

which there appears some little tincture in the last line of his dialogue with Lydia; "*Tecum vivere amem, tecum obeam libens.*" Horace's character in short, was a mixture, as that of every lively genius (as has been said before) may be expected to be, of sentiment and sensuality; a mixture, for the grosser parts of which there is no corrective but religion; and of all religions that have been promulgated, that corrective, with any degree of enforcement, is only to be found in the Christian.

The "*grata protervitas, et vultus nimium lubricus aspici*" may be very agreeable to a sensualist, and a refined one too; but the indulgence of the pleasure they give (at least the sensual indulgence) will not accord with the dictates either of reason or religion. The former, however, had probably but little effect in restraining the "*protervity*" and "*lubricity*" of the Roman beauties. Pride, indeed, might now and

then do something towards it. But what must have been the power that "the love of pleasure, and the love of sway" (their "ruling passions," if indeed Pope's satire is of general application) had over them.

CXLIII.

WHAT is it that constitutes our social enjoyments in this world? Is it not the union of minds and interests, and our mutual dependence upon each other?*

* If to contemplate Divine excellence, in the approaches that humanity is capable of making towards it, and to cherish the hopes of happiness, on the grounds on which that hope rests, are the highest and purest enjoyments (as they *surely* are) that we can have on earth; the perfection of those enjoyments, and the consummation of that hope, in a bliss which all the "communion of saints" (of blessed spirits) will join in partaking of, must as surely constitute the joys of heaven.

"What future bliss he gives thee not to know,
But gives that hope to be thy blessing now."

(POPE.)

What better association of minds can there be, than in their having the same supreme object of attention, and the same source of enjoyment, with fulness of power to par-

In a future state the two first may remain, and be carried to a much greater degree of elevation ; the last will be done away, and exchanged for a far higher and surer refuge ; a refuge promised to those who seek it, and who fulfil the conditions attached to the promise of it.

Northbrooke, April 4, 1821.

But is it not strange, that our doubts and uncertainties respecting the manner

take of it? and therefore what higher idea can we form of the communion of the blest in heaven? and when those that we love are taken from this world and from us, we ought to consider that it is but for a time that we are left here alone—"so soon to follow."

"Turn, hopeless thought, turn from her."—
 Yet why hopeless?—Yes—as to earthly hopes—but what are they, when compared to the hopes which both reason and religion hold out to us? It should seem, indeed, as if the thoughts had not then matured themselves in the poet's mind, which he afterwards (or elsewhere) expresses in such triumphant and unrivalled strains.—No, Young, I do not believe that if Pope had gone on to sing "immortal man" he would have "blest mankind" so much as you have done ; his "wing of fire" would not have carried him so high as you have "soared" (not "sunk") with yours.—So high! No; for you have soared *Christo* "duce, et auspice" *Christo*.

Young speaks of some writers—or readers, no matter which—who had "quite forgotten half their bible's praise," meaning its poetry. He had not forgotten it—for it inspired him.

in which a future retribution will take place, should beget in us any doubt of the fact* itself? Yet so I am afraid it often is : our wish to know more than we can, or than we ought to wish to know, seems to take from us the disposition to make a proper use of the knowledge we have.

CXLIV.

ONE great wish of humanity is for rest ; but a still greater for extension

* That the " fact " is certain, all the arguments that can be drawn from reason, powerfully as they are enforced in the " Night Thoughts," and above all, as they are sanctioned by the sacred writings, conspire to prove : that the " manner " is hid from us, further than a revelation of it is necessary to give the proper excitement to our hopes and fears, may be as reasonably accounted for. A higher knowledge would place us on a higher tribunal.

" All, all is right, by God ordained, or done ;

And who, but God, resumed the friends he gave ? "

" Who, without pain's advice, would e'er be good ?

Who, without death, but would be good in vain ? "

(*Night Thoughts, Night 9.*)

" ——— What though the sickle, sometimes keen,

Just scars us as we reap the golden grain ?

More than thy balm, O' illead, heals the wound."

(*Ibid, Night 3.*)

of knowledge and enjoyment. In a future state these may be united; peace* of mind, with a fuller exercise of its powers; and all centered in one great Object.

But must we not return to the sentiment of the ‘ Night Thoughts?’

“ Too great the bounty seems for earthly joy :
What heart but trembles at so strange a bliss ?”

Even our hopes of happiness must be accompanied with an awful dread : and well they may, mysterious as are both the nature of that happiness and our prospect of obtaining it.

With what then must “ our salvation be worked out,” but “ with fear and trembling ?”

Is our pride offended at these terms ? well then, we must seek our resource in insensibility—in hardness of heart—no, —in fortitude—but *Christian* fortitude :

* A peace of mind which “ this world cannot give!”—
Alas then, ye quietists.”

—but what is it that entirely “casteth out fear?” Are we not told it is “perfect love?”—Where is this to be found? In the enthusiastic ideas of the Methodists, &c.?—Ah, no. Where then? What more can designate an angel?*

CXLV.

IN considering the question put to our blessed Saviour by some of the Jews, viz; “to which of the seven husbands, of whom a woman had been successively the wife, she was to belong in heaven,” we cannot, I think, but admire the patient condescension with which he gives them the information contained in his answer. The censure, however, which we are inclined to throw upon their apparently

* Man’s love of God is best shewn in “keeping his commandments, to do them.” In that, he is as “perfectly loved, and worthily magnified,” as he can be by us, his creatures. And for that, humility (true humility, in accord with reason) is required.

foolish and impertinent curiosity, would in all probability have reverted upon ourselves, if we had not had the glorious light of the Gospel to guide us ; without that, a Plato indeed might in his closet, or in the porch of the academy, have marked, and almost measured, the space that separates spiritual from temporal interests and concerns ; and minds congenial to his would have hailed the discovery with applause ; but those of a less elevated cast would have considered it as a dream : the Christian revelation therefore was wanted (and blessed be the source from which that want has been supplied) to enable the humblest and lowest stages of human intellect to rise upon the wings of faith (of faith sanctioned by reason) to those heights to which, before, it required the genius of a Plato to soar.

CXLVI.

“DECIPIUNTNE” etiam, hæc omnia
visibilia? decipiunt sane; sed “non
decipiunt invisibilia.”

Young’s idea is strengthened by the
allowed truth, that many sensible ob-
jects (as colours, &c.) are, however agree-
able they may be to us, only illusions, that
is, effects upon our organs; what then
must real ones (“invisibilia”) be? *
and surely something must be real.

CXLVII.

——“In meipso totus teres atque rotundus,
Externi ne quid valeat per læve morari.”

* We are so afraid of indulging chimerical ideas, or rather perhaps so influenced by other and less harmless motives, that we do not always consult our reason to know how far the suggestions of our senses and our passions may mislead us.

That is, of any thing that I may see or hear, to induce me to change the sentiments I can justify to myself.

Northbrook, May 8, 1821.

Ad Londinium iturus scripsit.—W. D.

Direct me, I beseech thee, O Lord, direct me in all my goings; and whatever protection I may want, either from others or from myself, afford it to me !

What is to happen, what is to endure, will be as it pleases God to ordain : if what we wish does not do either of these, *soumettons nous*.

CLXVIII.

AMONGST our enjoyments here may be reckoned (what perhaps at first has a contrary appearance) that of unsatisfied and unsatisfiable curiosity, which keeps alive all our faculties of enjoyment. I think that without being chimerical, we may suppose the case of celestial beings

to be somewhat similar to ours, and this idea I would support by instancing the text of scripture, which calls our redemption by our blessed Saviour a mystery which "the angels themselves desire to look into;" this surely implies unsatisfied curiosity, the effect of which may be the same as those above-mentioned.

Has not this some plausibility at least ?



CXLIX.

ANALOGICAL reasoning can only be deceptive when the analogy is imaginary and not real ; and this distinction may, I believe, be made.

Young calls analogy "man's surest guide below," I rather think it is the only guide he has ; for we can only judge from comparison ; and in making a comparison, we are placed between the extremes of analogy so close as

almost to amount to absolute identity, which can leave no room for a doubtful conclusion ; and an analogy so remote as to leave little similitude between the objects but what must exist between any two whatever, as there can be no terrestrial objects that are dissimilar to each in all points. Between these two extremes, there are numberless degrees of similitude, each of which affects the observer more or less according to his turn of mind ; at any rate an increase in the number of those that apply to the objects, whatever their individual force may be, must give them an increase of weight. I am not prepared to illustrate this by any instance, so I must leave it to the sagacity of my reader, if I have given him information enough to exercise it.

What are we told, what are we not told, when we read that "God is love?"

CL.

THE result of thought must be the investigation of it. How else would "second thoughts be best?"

CLII.

Our feelings are given us, and if we can justify them by our reason, we may be pretty sure that they will not prove detrimental, either to others or to ourselves.

CLIII.

CAN the mind which has ideas want resources in itself? No, while it has these ideas, with the power of reducing them into shape by words (expressing them) it cannot.

CLIV.

“How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable to me are all,” &c. No, they are not so, say second thoughts. There are many that may be more than enjoyed.

CLV.

SURELY Rousseau could not think that his making his shameful “confessions” to men, was a substitute for making them to his God? or that the former was a necessary addition to the latter?

CLVI.

How late do we learn many of perhaps the most useful truths? Yes, we may well “learn through life.”

CLVII.

THOSE who think, should write for those who do not.

CLVIII.

How often, in our most serious moments, may we have to acknowledge the truth of Pope's line, "and not a vanity is given in vain." I almost wish that I could put confidence enough in my reader to disclose to him the feeling that suggested this quotation, and the application of it. He will at least give me credit for not having reason to be ashamed of it. Shall I say that my work will speak for me?—at least it will not condemn me. I shall not be convicted, either out of my own mouth, nor from my own pen. The secret then

Q.

must be kept for my own private friends.

CLIX.

WHEN we say that a man does things like nobody else, we speak hyperbolically ; for every thing must have been done by somebody ; otherwise the proverb would not be true, that "there is nothing new under the sun."

CLX.

DARE I say that I would not resign her, even to my God? O! no, I dare not: but if I was told by him, that she would be transferred to the enjoyment of unspeakable happiness, should I not say, "may not this be deferred?" If the answer was "no," what should I say? "Take her, take her;" and leave

me the most miserable wretch on earth,
rather than she should be deprived
of----- These trials have been made.

CLXI.

THE fulness of the heart fills the
head, and thus one overflows into the
other, and is discharged either by the
mouth or pen.

CLXII.

WHOEVER feels strongly cannot write
weakly.

CLXIII.

WHEN the Apostle Thomas was called
upon by our arisen Saviour, the glorious
victor of sin and death, to "reach forth

his hand, and to feel the wound in his side,* and the print of the nails in his hands and feet," could he, after he had done this, could he possibly do less than cry out, "my Lord and my God?" and could he receive a more gentle, and at the same time a more forcible reproof from his gracious, his divine Master, than "Thomas, because thou hast seen, thou hast believed; blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed?" believed, because though they had not had those overpowering proofs that were afforded to St. Thomas, they had seen and heard what was amply sufficient to do every thing but *force* their belief. My readers will see why this ought not to be done, and they will also see for and to whom this was meant and addressed; and their hearts will not be hardened.

* Are *these* "interpolations" too, ye wretched infidels?

CLXIV.

YOUNG says (can he be too often or too repeatedly quoted ?) speaking of the pangs of death,

What tho' the sickle, sometimes keen,
Just scars us as we reap the golden grain ?
More than thy balm, O Gilead, heals the wound."

What say ye to this, ye worldlings ?
Is this gloomy ?

CLXV.

HENCEFORTH, says St. Paul, let no man trouble me ; for I bear in my body the marks of Christ Jesus. May not every man, even in these our times, who is a thorough *believer*, say the same ? For *thenceforth* nothing will, or can trouble him.

 CLXVI.

WE pray to thee, O Christ, with the Father and the Holy Ghost : for what works didst thou perform ! what a life didst thou lead ! and what an end didst thou suffer ! an end, followed by an assured resurrection. And could thy mission be less than from God ? could thy nature be less than divine ? O ! no.—Confounding as it is to all our ideas, it *must* be so ; without the evidence in favour of it we could not receive it ; with it (O read and weigh the scriptures ye who doubt !) we *must*. For the rest, if we have any feelings, let *them* dictate it to us.

 CLXVII.

THE very frivolous objections made by Thomas Paine and others like him,

against the passage in St. Paul, which says, that "the grain is not quickened unless it die," may be easily answered by shewing that in analogies, a close similitude (or parallelism) is not required, but only a general or partial one, which in this case exists; for though the grain in fact dies, as to change of form and substance, so does the body, but a germ, a precious germ, is preserved, which will maintain its existence in a future state, not indeed like the plant, to run the circle of growth and decay in endless repetitions, but to flourish in that lasting perfection to which its past qualities and its use of them, may, through the mercies of God, and the mediation of our blessed Saviour, entitle it.

CLXVIII.

SURELY it cannot be a necessary consequence of much thinking, to unfit the

mind for the enjoyment of, and participation in, the common intercourse of society: it may indeed for the frivolous part of it, which passes lightly from one subject to another, without dwelling upon any, or at least any that deserves to be dwelt upon. However there is always some importance attached to the “quicquid agunt homines.”

CLXIX.

O SUN, sun, how chearful, how all-cheering are thy beams! which now strike through my window; and I hail them with a more than friendly voice—a voice of love, of gratitude, of every thing short of adoration. And O ye, whose participation, whose sympathy, I most desire—and *whose* desire I not?—&c.

Harcourt-house, May 12, 1821.

Hora sexta, A. M.

 CLXX.

SHALL I say that I wish to indulge feelings to be envied by those who have them not? Have them not! Insolent egotist! *Who* has them not? Alas, however, there are other feelings, other passions that obstruct them!

 CLXXI.

WHOEVER loves one sex cannot hate the other.—Hate! has God made us to hate one another? If thou wilt hate, begin with thyself.

 CLXXII.

YES, she is pleasing, very pleasing; her countenance, voice, and manner, are

indicative of her character, and are all highly engaging and estimable : she is not in the first bloom of youth, to be sure, but—first bloom of youth ! and in what state of maturity are you ? Would you be eating peaches and nectarines all the year round ? Let your food be mental.



CLXXIII.

“ Mind, mind alone, bear witness Earth and Heaven !
The living fountains in itself contains
Of beauteous and sublime.”

And it must be so ; for all beauty of form, the charming characteristic of the female sex, and indeed of the male too, for the human face is divine, should be but the external sign of the superior beauty that reigns within. For this, we attach ideas of character to each feature, or association of features ; for this we represent angels as clothed in all

that is expressive of purity, benevolence, and dignity ; and *from* this results the impossibility, as I have always thought, of giving to the countenance of our blessed Saviour that union of all the virtues, carried to the divinest perfection, that must have been displayed in it. But to descend from these heights ; even in the animal creation, we seek for character in the form and appearance of the face, if face it may universally be called ; mildness or ferocity, cunning and sagacity, or simplicity and folly, &c. ; and in the proofs we find of these, we also find our reasons for entertaining sentiments of partiality for, or dislike of, the creatures that exhibit them : and even in the consistent demonstration of the least amiable qualities (except those which excite our horror) we find motives for some degree of interest and esteem. Thus it is that mind, and the permanency of its action, has the most powerful influence over our opinions and affec-

tions; and through this medium we look up, as Plato did, to “the first good, first perfect, and first fair; drawing from thence our hopes and expectations of future powers of contemplating it, when the veil of mortality which now obscures our mental sight, shall be removed, and the clearness with which we shall then “see and be seen,” shall shine in its full splendor for evermore.

CLXXIV.

I CANNOT help hoping that some ideas expressed in this book, will justify the others: at least I persuade myself that no inconsistency will be found in them: nothing to cast the imputation on the writer of being at war with himself. If this be so, will it not justify this address to my readers? If at any time you think that your ideas become more elevated, which they will certainly do in propor-

tion as they are more just, then,

“Pursue their flight, and let it lead to heaven.”

CLXXV.

SHALL I say, that it is no matter from what fount we draw our inspiration, provided its stream be pure? Surely I may say it; for there is but one fount to which purity may be traced, from which it can emanate, or with which it can be connected. Indulge then in copious draughts; swell as they may your heart, and flow from your pen.

CLXXVI.

ON ne sent ses propres forces, qu'en en faisant usage.*

My reader's candour will find me excuses for these occasional insertions of French; and if he likes the language as well as I do (at least in prose) he will find more than excuses.

 CLXXVII.

WHAT is it that forms public opinion? Is there such a thing as common sense? It is not *common* however; but it must be possessed. Something impedes the use of it: what is this something?—the passions?—prejudice?—human weakness? *Compatissons la, donc*: truth, however, makes its way. Talk and act (to a certain degree) with the world, and think for ourselves; but let not our part be a double one.

 CLXXVIII.

EXPRESSING sentiments in a sort of familiar way, descending almost to coarseness, seems to fix the attention and induce intelligence. The familiarity begins by making us suppose we must

understand the subject it relates to, and by fixing our attention makes us really understand it. We think it would be a shame for us not to understand the whole of what we can so easily understand a part of. (See one of Mr. Burke's speeches, in which he uses the phrase, "neither fish, flesh, nor good red herring.") However, other reasons may be given for this effect on our minds.

CLXXIX.

ANOTHER week is begun ; what will happen to me in the course of it? Good? Ill? If good, make me thankful for it : if ill, make me submissively acquiescent in it. And you, my good friend, what have you to expect? I think neither good nor ill ; for you seem to swim, like many others, on the placid stream of indifference. And yet how necessary is it, to prevent this from deteriorating into

intolerable stagnation, that we should create an interest for ourselves out of any trifles that may lay in our way. Well does Young say "Life's cares are comforts;" and well is it that our passions have the power of affording those comforts to themselves; of providing their own aliment; under the controul of Reason, however, for without her they are wretched caterers; and what has Reason to guide her? What has she not, to exalt her rod of controul into a torch of fire, that points and lights the way to the source from which all the ardour flows that impels her on her glorious course? The coal that was laid on Isaiah's lips (I speak with reverence) did not raise the warmth of his feelings to a more inspiring flame, nor carry him to higher regions of prophetic inspiration, than our reason, refined and exalted by its own fervency, and purified by the Divine Spirit that gave it birth, and now gives it action, carries us into the contempla-

tion of objects that are not of mortal, but of spiritual and celestial mould. Then let her take her fill of inspiration, freed from all danger of being bewildered by the ignis fatuus that the victims of their own foolish fancies have mistaken for the fire that illumines her, and by all the obscure and mis-shapen forms that their wayward and ill-directed imaginations have held up to their own admiration and that of the foolish dupes who have been fascinated by them. These will all vanish before the sacred lights of reason and real genius.

CLXXX.

THE full measure of possible perfection is probably filled up in nature, as being the necessary result of omnipotent agency, put in action by consummate wisdom and benevolence; therefore, if we have an idea of any thing being

R

wanting to fill it up here, it is probably realised somewhere else; as in music (so capable of exciting celestial feelings), poetry, &c. Painting I should be inclined to except, as reality there* must succeed to representation. The sensations excited by the others I think we may suppose, from a fair analogy, to be continued and perfected in another state. Mental pleasure is surely the object of creative power (and is it not our highest enjoyment here?); and we cannot suppose any limit to the exercise of it.

CLXXXI.

It is very odd that we should seek to make a proposition more intelligible by abstracting it from all the means we have of intelligence, and by removing a difficulty out of our mental sight, to put

* In a future world.

an end to its existence as such ; for so it seems to be in metaphysical reasoning, at least in that which would substitute the imaginary (though in fact unimaginable) beings of Fate, Chance, or Necessity, in lieu of an intelligent and all-efficient Cause. By this, all reasoning from analogy is precluded ; and why ? because we find that analogy does not give us the means of intelligence that our insatiable curiosity requires : and so we take away all the ground that our evidence can stand upon ; at least if, as Young says, “analogy is man’s surest guide below :” and this ground being removed, the mind having no other to rest upon, gradually ceases to receive what wants the support which its own nature requires things should have, to induce its acquiescence in them. We seek to make our belief of metaphysical truths (for such surely is the existence of a Supreme Being) a matter of mere habit, without connecting it

with any thing that may be necessary to substantiate it, and to give it a firm hold on our minds. The Deist may fancy he does this, by merely referring to the existence of order, and the consequent necessity of intelligent agency; but we want other analogies to fix us in that belief which requires the concurrence of our reason and our feelings to give it permanency and consistency in our minds; for otherwise it may (and perhaps must) be only the loose belief (if theirs deserved the name) that the King of Prussia, and Voltaire, and others like them, had, and which was shaken by every intervention of difficulty or doubt. O then, let us trust to the supports which have been given us, and which we could neither acquire, nor compensate the want of, by any sentiments of our own.

Reception and attachment must be founded on intelligence and agreement, (agreement of head and heart): so it is in human things, and so it is in divine.

Ah ! there are other means of inducing and fixing attachment, than those (gross and unsentimental as they are) which commonly influence our minds ; means too of superior power and energy : true, it requires a disposition to be influenced by them ; but when these means are had in view, that disposition has been previously observed ; and have I not observed it?

CLXXXII.

Good God ! that we should be obdurately deaf to all the persuasions that we can hear, because we hear not those we cannot hear !

CLXXXIII.

“ O how you surprise, how you astonish me.”—Yes, you sweet creature, you

was surprised and astonished ; and your being so, and your manner of expressing it, prove alike *what* you are. And shall I not trust to nature, and nature in such a garb ? O yes, my sweetest Anne, I will doubt no longer, but will implicitly believe, and firmly and invariably attach myself.*

Ah Anne, Anne, vous voyez bien que je me suis jetté a vos pieds, et vous serez trop genereuse pour abuser du pouvoir que vous avez acquis sur moi : vous le meritez, j'en suis persuadé, et mon instinct (car c'est bien lui qui m'a poussé en avant) ne m'aura pas trompé. Et vous, pardonnez, chere ombre de ma femme, si votre image s'est trop tot remplacé dans mon cœur par un objet qui, *j'espere*, en sera digne.

* Ask you, O reader, why this was inserted ? It concerns not you, to be sure ; but will not a general excuse be found in *Love* ? Surely you have felt its power, and that where Love claims the heart, it bears no rival there.— May it be a source of thankfulness in me ! and may at least the feelings excited by it be not incompatible with those which religion ought to excite !

And thou, O God, who hast given me these feelings, direct them, I beseech thee, to their proper end !

CLXXXIV.

THE world, the feeling part of it at least, will understand how sentiments mix themselves in the mind, how they urge each other on, how the sense of a want is increased by personal and still more by mental recollections, and how, when a void is left in the heart, it must be filled up by a living object. No, I will not say that, neither; the urn and its ashes may suffice, and all that Aken-side describes may be felt, and rapturously felt : but when an object presents itself, similar in external form, and still more so in mind, the sentiment may still subsist, while the object is changed.

The remembrance is not lost when the affection is thus transferred; one re-

cals the other ; for feelings arising from the same source must associate themselves in the mind. The man who has lost one friend and gained another, says, “I have given one friend to heaven, and heaven has given another to me, and I am grateful for both.” From the same source we derive both the satisfaction and the consolation : both indeed in one ; for what but satisfaction can arise from looking to that source from which both must flow ?

But, O God ! if the gentlest virtues—if the truest piety—if the most amiable display of both during a life the decline of which was marked with all the trials which decaying health could impose—if these can entitle the possessor, the displayer of them—the sufferer—to an abode with thee, she is surely blessed in that abode ; and that she is so blessed, neither the best dictates of our reason and our feelings, nor all the enforcements of them in the unanswerable ar-

guments of the Night Thoughts, nor the still more powerful as more authoritative declarations of the sacred writings, permit us to doubt.

Therefore let me venture to offer up this prayer;—I beseech thee, O Lord, to favour the cause I have in view; to bring it to a happy issue, and to make it, finally, the means of an infinitely happier issue succeeding it, in an union of everlasting felicity, where “there is no marrying, or giving in marriage,” but where all the spirits of the blest are united in the eternal praises of their Creator.

To thee, O world, “nostrorum, sermonum candide judex,” I address these disclosures; aware, indeed, how little claim they have to attention more than those of any other insignificant individual, to whom, however, justice will be done where it is due, and the opinion of the world will do it. I have said that sentiments may be allowed to mix them-

selves in the mind ; but they must not press too closely on each other in action ; especially when worse motives may induce to that action, under the disguise of the better. It is necessary to the best interest of society, qu'elle ne prenne pas le change : but an allowance may surely be made, as in judicial proceedings, for *character*, when a deviation (not carried too far) from the common customs of society demands it.

CLXXXV.

A FINAL settlement seems to be required ; but why it is required, that is, from what cause an unsettled state of things derives its existence, who can tell ? But the will of God is ; must be, supreme ; and whatever imperfections there are, exist, it should seem, in his works. But are *they* imperfections, which we deem such ? Is not the exis-

tence of evil, one? or is its existence necessary to that of its opposite, good? or is all our reasoning erroneous, because limited? If so, then well may these mysteries be inscrutable by us, and audacious is our curiosity that attempts to penetrate them.

CLXXVI.

How admirable is that sentence of Terence, "*Homo sum, nihil humani a me alienum puto!*" as levelling all the distinctions of society into one common description of man; for if "*nihil humani alienum,*" then *omne humani proprium,* and as such entitling him to all the attention and good will we can bestow; as Young says "*proprietors eternal of our love.*" The next step is, the gentleman, a description also confined to no rank, but extending to all who have the sentiments, with some correspondency

of manner, that belong to it. These exalt the man into the gentleman, and the Christian; these are what Pope had in view in his “worth makes the man,” &c. (which, by the bye, is a paraphrase on his “an honest man’s the noblest work of God”), and these bring individuals together on the firm ground of confidence, respect, and good will; not of familiarity, for respect to ourselves and to others forbids that, unless in the common intercourse of society among equals in rank or in habits of acquaintance, and where there are no higher objects in view than the ordinary business of life. When two persons meet as *men* (on the ground above-mentioned) a *third* is present, whose awful controul gives a far more solemn importance to their addresses to each other; and with that importance, an interest which will engross every affection of the heart, if it be a feeling one.

CLXXXVII.

HABITS of attention to particular objects will, of course, engross the mind, and sometimes will prevent it from attending to others that are connected with them ; as I have found in matters relating to literary composition, in which the compositor (for so I think the directors of the press are called) in his direction, paid a particular attention to the grammatical and ordinary construction of a passage, but at the expence of the effect intended by the writer, and even of all meaning whatever : so that (what is curious enough) an attention (ill-directed indeed) to the means, was preventive of the attainment of its end.*

* To illustrate this, see No. 130, where the compositor had contrived to substitute an ending with a full period ("began.") in lieu of the abrupt conclusion which leaves the reader to continue and finish it : the *effect* of which he will judge of.

CLXXXVIII.

WHAT? Is "How the heart trembles at so strange a bliss!" to be instanced in human prospects, as well as the divine ones that Young had in view? If it is, it must be from some similarity of sentiment, and similarity there surely is, when the sentiment is such as is described in No. 40, and in the latter part of No. 70. It has a corporeal mixture to be sure, but how refined by the "certain strainers" that exalt the feelings to—what?—O Love, Love, thou alone canst tell! And whither would thy influence carry me?— - - - No, I will not abuse the patience of my reader.

CLXXXIX.

"Liber ibis in urbem."

WHETHER to meet with circulation

there, I know not. The addition of “*nec invideo sine me,*” neither the circumstances I am placed in, nor my inclination or intention, at least beyond a certain degree, would justify, as I have neither the right, nor the wish, to compare myself with Ovid. But my reader will say, “what is the book a “remedium for?”—O, for many things, reader, if you apply it to your own case, and if your case demands it. And first for ignorance.—What? when it begins with a confession of that?—Well, and is not the sense of ignorance one of our best acquirements? For melancholy. What? with all its gloom and dullness, made worse by quotations from the Night Thoughts?—I fear, O reader, you have not read it with attention.

CXC.

THE interest we take in any object, depends as well on our regard for it, as

upon the constitution of our minds. Some people carry this to a great degree of minuteness, perhaps at the expence of attention to things of greater consequence; for instance, what real interest can attach itself to what has so much of the “*nunc mihi nunc alii*” belonging to it, as the house that a man, let him be as great or as interesting as he will, lived in, and that Dick, Tom, Harry, &c. &c. have lived in since? The same takes place in the illustrations of places mentioned in Cowper’s poems, &c. which have often nothing to recommend them but that mention, only the poet’s having now and then walked in those places, and by their being beautifully engraved, after the designs of Westall, &c.



CXCI.

I wish to refer my reader to a letter which appeared some time ago in the

Gentleman's Magazine, under the signature, if I recollect right, of Philologus, in which I attempted to shew the superiority of the ancient languages over the modern, in conciseness and energy, by instancing a sentence, "*gaude tu, gaudeantque omnes*," which in the Italian would be, *godì tu, godete tutti*: in French, *Rejouis-toi tu, et que tous se rejouissent*; in English, (come forth John Bull, leaning upon your auxiliary verbs) *Do thou rejoice, and let all rejoice.*" Of the three last, the Italian keeps pace with her parent in conciseness, but not I think in elegance; the two last, as being of a mongrel breed, though deriving (partly at least) their origin from a respectable sire, limp awkwardly behind on their reflective and auxiliary supports.

An instance also of the little that is to be gained by losing sight of an original derivation, may, I think, be adduced in the substitution which our writers have

lately chosen to make, of the weak and foolish participle *Isolated*, for *Insulated* ; the latter an immediate derivative from the original Latin, is manly, simple, and sufficiently soft to be a characteristic member of our language. The former, effeminate and indecisive, (giving, however, to the beautiful Italian language all the credit due to the harmony, and to the noble tragic poet Alfieri (the favorite of Melpomene) all the dignity of his expressive and energetic muse ; and having a weak and undetermined chain of connection through a modern medium, with its original derivation. *Insula* (it might as well be traced to *solus*)—*isola*—*isolata*,—from whence the French* *isolé*, *isolated*. Reader, how like you this? will you not return to *Insulated*?

* If that language could not emancipate itself (did Rome prevent it?) from the chains of the Italian, why should not ours? Let us not imitate, *ut servum pecus*, but where there is good reason for it.

CXCII.

WHEN I am dead and gone, all that personally concerned me will probably be forgotten. This little book may perhaps remain—and so,

Addio, Signori miei.

E Londinio exiturus, spei plenus, sed non votis cito satisfactorus, scripsit, W. D. Junii die 5, 1821.

CXCIII.

WE are often inclined to ascribe an effect to one cause, when it may be owing to a combination of,—how many ! In reasoning thus we may often lose ground instead of gaining it.

CXCIV.

HAPPINESS, it is said, is but opinion ; if this is true, is it not the more in our power ?

CXCIV.

THE heart should have but one common language. How is it that the expression is so different? Is it because every passion has its dialect?

CXCV.

EVERY man's conduct, whatever way it is directed, must, I should think, be in some shape the result of inclination. Should not this teach us neither to be too proud of ourselves, nor too ready to condemn others?

CXCVI.

ARE there many who can truly say when they approach the Temple of God,

“Ad istud vero non trahit levitas aliqua, nec curiositas aut sensualitas: sed firma fides, devota spes, et sincera charitas.”

Thomas a Kempis de Imit. Christ. Lib. 4.—9.

CXCVIII.

How nice is the distinction between consistency and obstinacy! unless we reason largely, liberally, and justly.

CXCIX.

WITH whatever degree of ability men may express their thoughts, there are few, I should imagine, who do not think more than they can express.

CC.

A STRONG disapprobation (however just it may be) of any opinion or practice

may incline us to give too unqualified an approbation of the opposite way of thinking or acting. Thus "Incidit in scyllam, qui vult vitare charybdim." This perhaps arises from our thinking that we ought to embrace a decided opinion, and to do justice both to ourselves and the opinion we adopt, by shewing the strength of our adherence to it. For what may this be a substitute?

 CCI.

IN life we are continually seeking for what may interest us; but how often must we be content with what will merely amuse us!

 CCII.

ARE there not many things amongst the institutions of society, which have

been the subjects of violent and obstinate controversy, and of which a little unprejudiced common sense may be able at once to form both the censure and the apology.

CCIII.

Most people love their ease, but few know how to earn it, and still fewer perhaps how to enjoy it. Is it not the want of this knowledge that makes many a restless mind?

CCIV.

THERE is a kind of good advice of which perhaps it may be said, that by those who think seriously it is not wanted, and on those who do not, it is thrown away.

CCV.

To which shall the child of affliction have recourse, religion or philosophy? Religion opens her arms: Philosophy has no arms to open.

CCVI.

OF what feelings is not the human heart capable, and what ideas may not be excited in the mind? Purify and exalt, I beseech thee, O Lord, those of which I am conscious, imperfect as that consciousness is, and direct them to their proper end.

CCVII.

SERIOUSNESS begets sympathy.

CCVIII.

MEDIA inter pocula.—Half seas over.

CCIX.

Is not the “aurea mediocritas” the (moral) philosopher’s stone?

CCX.

Is it strength of mind, or of the passions, that generally conduces the most to form what is called a decided character?

CCXI.

I have heard it somewhat shrewdly said, that if men were not sometimes

obstinate, they would not know when they were in the right. But this is a caricature.

CCXII.

WE can only judge of things comparatively: to do this justly, we should compare them, not with what *might be* but with what *is*.

CCXIII.

“THERE is no wonder, or else all is wonder.”—And all is wonder. Why? Because all, collectively or individually, is beyond, far beyond, our knowledge and comprehension.

CCXIV.

IF it were absolutely necessary that preaching and practising should go hand

in hand, how many would there be to claim the right of preaching ?

CCXV.

DOING *nothing* may be said to be idleness. But is there not often as much dissipation as occupation in doing *something* ?

CCXVI.

NATURAL grace seems to consist in putting a figure precisely in the attitude that the action, or the intent of that attitude, requires : and all beyond that is affectation, all below it awkwardness. For this reason I must own that I cannot help preferring the beautiful simplicity of Chantry's figures, to the shewy, but often meretricious and extravagant graces of his fashionable rival Canova.

CCXVII.

ALL number, however multiplied, is nothing in comparison with infinity. What a subject for thought ! if thought could reach it.

CCXVIII.

Alas, Alas ! non in terra quies : solamina, yes.

CCXIX.

To be just to others, a man should not be more than just to himself.

CCXX.

How often are our passions our worst enemies.

CCXXI.

HUMILITY without debasement.

CCXXII.

WE have perhaps as much reason to be surprised at the variety and extent to which our reasoning on moral or physical subjects can be carried, as at the little real knowledge we can attain of either.

CCXXIII.

“Je ne sçais rien, je n’ai jamais rien sçu,” says a French author, whom I lately read. This might be truly said, in a certain sense, I believe, by the wisest man that ever lived, but if the assertion is meant to sanction the ex-

treme of scepticism, (than which nothing is more dogmatic) it is as reprehensible as it is false.

 CCXXIV.

In matters of sentiment, the grounds of assent or rejection must, I should suppose, differ from those of mere matter of fact ; and the manner and degree of assent obtained must probably depend a good deal upon the moral inclination of the person addressed to. Now religion is chiefly a matter of sentiment : not merely the judgment, but all the passions are concerned, one way or another, in its reception or rejection.

 CCXXV.

“ I ne’er shall look upon his like again.”

“ Quando ullum inveniam parem ?”

O Shakespeare and Horace, may I add my voice to yours? Yes, surely, for never was this tribute of filial affection more strongly called for.

CCXXVI.

How many things there are that make life appear to be a contest of policy ! If it is so, happy is it that "honesty is the best policy !"

CCXXVII.

PLAINNESS and simplicity of manners. Is not that the test of virtue both in a nation and individuals ?

CCXXVIII.

A MAN who finds all his happiness in

the enjoyments of this life, is as irrational as he who finds none in them.

CCXXIX.

ARE not philosophers apt to reason upon human nature as if there was nothing beyond it?

CCXXX.

It is a dangerous and pernicious thing to disguise or pervert truth in any case ; but to avoid this, all the circumstances of the case, and all that is connected with it, should be fairly and judiciously considered.

CCXXXI.

IN how many cases it is difficult (and how difficult !) to satisfy ourselves !

CCXXXII.

WHAT is the great business of life, the great stimulus to human exertion? Competition.

CCXXXIII.

“METIRI se quemque suo modulo ac pede,” is one of the best rules that have been given for the conduct of life; but it is a very comprehensive one, and to practise it a man should know himself well, and have all the requisites to enable him to be (as Mr. Greville expresses it in his maxims) “in his proper place.”

CCXXXIV.

THERE is, perhaps, as much variety as sameness in human characters.

T

CCXXXV.

LIFE is a school : but all may not be equally able to undergo the severer parts of its discipline : however, they will have assistance.

CCXXXVI.

THERE is enough in human life to create solicitude and doubt, and enough to give confidence and assurance. These different sensations may be produced by the different sides on which we view the picture. To compare and judge of them fairly, we should see both together : but can we do that ? The metaphor seems to imply that we cannot.

CCXXXVII.

How necessarily does the imperfection of language seem to result from the imperfection of our knowledge and ideas ! And vice versa.

CCXXXVIII.

SHAKESPEARE has the art of making even his play upon words add to the pathos of the passages in which he exhibits it: for instance, Othello's last words after stabbing himself, "I kist thee ere I kill'd thee: no way but this, killing myself to die upon a kiss." But perhaps, in fact, the pun here is lost in the pathos, or rather the conceit—for pun there is none.

CCXXXIX.

THE preservation of the lives of individuals may often be of greater importance in the eye of humanity than of policy : I mean in its immediate tendency, for its ultimate must be to preserve those bonds which are necessary to unite men in a state of society. The great object of government should be to make the general interest the interest also of each individual.

CCXL.

WHAT a resource against *ennui* does the variety, and may I not say confusion* of human affairs, with all their

* That is, *apparent* confusion, "a mighty maze, but not without a plan." But that plan, with all its combinations, incomprehensible by us : by us, *indeed*—blind as we are !

relations, present ! and how often are we obliged to this resource ! But is it so easy to draw order out of this confusion ?

CCXLI.

Who is there, that thinks at all, who does not, when he retires to rest, ask himself, “ What have I been doing to-day ? ”

CCXLII.

Wisdom may be unfathomable, as Divine wisdom undoubtedly is; and if so, its results may be equally beyond our comprehension, or (consequently)

But that there is a plan, is surely evident, from mere *subsistence*—and what medium can there be between order and confusion ? I mean chaotic confusion : and what is order, but systematic arrangement ? The sceptic may be dissatisfied with these, or any such words : but what words will satisfy him ?

reception ; that is, as truths that may be comprehended, but not as such as may not be attested by comprehensible evidence. In how many shapes this truth will present itself to the mind, I believe the preceding pages of this book will serve to shew.

CCXLIII.

HAIL to the freshness of the morning air ! and all hail to thee, O thou rising Sun, that gladdenest my heart with thy beams !

Andover—Sole oriente, iter ad Exoniam faciens,
June 6, 1821.—W. D.

CCXLIV.

“ Who now exults but —— at his heart ? ”

Let me not exult however beyond measure : let me be “ *ab insolenti temperatus latitia* ” — “ *moriturus.* ”

 CCXLV.

“ Ille potens sui lætusque vivet.”

WHO knows how to keep the passions that nature has given him, within their proper bounds, and to direct them to their proper purposes ?

 CCXLVI.

I KNEW a man who was of a very social turn, but a little too fond of hearing himself talk, and I am afraid, in other respects, did not answer the description given in the preceding number. Somebody observed of him, that he justified Pope's description of individual happiness,

“ There's not a bliss the human heart can find,
But some way leans, and hearkens to mankind.”

Aye, says another, so he may in leaning,

but certainly not in hearkening, for he talks too much himself to do that. This may not be a bad hint for me to close my book.

CCXLVII.

It must be expected, that in people who are much conversant with the world, there will be an indisposition to give credit to simplicity of character.* This, like other opinions, will arise chiefly from habit and experience, and from the want of opportunity, which these and other causes occasion, to make observations of what might afford room for different and more favorable sentiments than what the commerce of the world (the fashionable part of it at least) generally excites.†

* No Anne, they do not do thee justice.

† Query, How far is Rousseau's assertion, "*L'homme est bon, mais les hommes sont mechans,*" true?

CCXLVIII.

ALL beauty must arise from simplicity, and whatever accessories may be given to it, they should adorn, but not disguise or alter it. Simplicity indeed is truth ; and the only substitution for it must be that of its opposite, falsehood. This may serve to introduce the mention of a promise made me of becoming the happy possessor of a work of a great original master, at the end of the present year 1821, the intermediate delay being, as I find, necessary on account of certain rules attached to the circumstances of the case. Perhaps, (says my reader) you mean some work of Sir Joshua Reynolds's, of whose I heard that you have lately purchased several very beautiful, as, a St. John, a Holy Family, &c; though after all, this of which you have spoken may be

only a copy.—No, reader, it is an original, not by the hands of Sir Joshua, great as he certainly was, and happy as are his representations of nature ; but by that of a still greater master : some alterations and improvements indeed have been made by more modern masters, since its first production, but in no way altering or interfering with the purity and simplicity of the original design. The time (about 26 years from its first production, which was on the 1st of January, 1796,) that it has remained in the hands of its present worthy possessor, has given sufficient mellowness to the tints, but without at all diminishing their freshness, or that charming glow of colouring which would do honor to the pencil of Rubens, without any of that excessive plumpness or awkwardness that makes downright kitchen-wenches of his Venus's and Graces ; nor yet has this picture, (true as it is to nature in her best manner)

the extreme grace bordering on affectation, observable in many of Guido's figures; this (being a full length) is about 5 feet 2 inches in height. To describe the different parts of it:—the general outline is elegant, filled up chiefly with the most beautiful carnation; the hair is nearly black, the eyes of a lovely hazel, the nose* perhaps rather too low and broad, but not at all flat, being in perfect harmony with the rest of the features, and the line of it approaching to the Grecian; the mouth sufficiently small and round, with a turn of the upper lip that gives a peculiar grace and archness to a smile full of sweetness and expression, without the smallest mixture of affectation or awkwardness; a smile that far outdoes that of Prior's Chloe, when she gave it as a reward for "her lover's pains;"—for this is a face "as much fairer than hers,"

* N. B. This feature is not done justice to in this description.

&c.—a smile too, that forms a delightful contrast with the equally touching sensibility that shews itself when opposite emotions are awakened. In short, reader, to let you into a secret that I fear I have already betrayed, it is a work that you will say is impossible as an improvement on nature; and so it would be, reader, were it a work of art; but it is an improvement by Nature on herself; on all the works that she ever produced before. For the mind that inhabits and animates this charming frame, I must refer you, O reader, to a higher and worthier source. Sufficient to say that it is fully adequate to all that I have described.

YES, my sweet Anne, you ought to have been elevated to a much higher rank, as you well deserve it, than to be the wife of a *Yorkshire Squire*. And yet, why? *Fama et honores, et opes, et dignitas, non nisi per virtutes, et pro meritis petenda sunt, aut præberi de-*

bent, et sane omittenda facile sunt, ut nihil ad vitæ pretium referencia: igitur,

“Stet quicumque volet potens
Aulæ culmine lubrico,” &c.

Non tamen hominum existimationem parvi facio; sed unde recte speranda est quæro.

CCXLIX.

GRATIAS, gratias ardentissimas, propter hæc, propter omnia; for what wish have I unfulfilled? or at least as near fulfilment as human probabilities can make it. But are these certitudes?—“Sperat infaustis, metuit secundis rebus,” &c.—But are joy and fear compatible with each other? Yes, perhaps, if a third sentiment intervenes—a reference to superior power; and what does this reference produce? Is it not security? And does not this prove that

security is necessary to the human heart ? And what but religion can give it ? And what religion but the Christian assures us of it ? This then gives the *bene præparatum pectus*." How do we acquire this ? can we without adversity ? Perhaps not thoroughly ; such then are the " uses of adversity," and such the " precious jewel in his head," (beautiful appropriation of popular superstition ?); uses, that give us a knowledge of ourselves ; a knowledge of what is unfathomable, if we would indeed reach its bottom with our short line—a knowledge of our minds, which are as prone to error as to rectitude ; as sensible to pleasure as to pain, O God, thou knowest us ; thy knowledge supplies the defect of ours, and determines the proportionate responsibility we owe to thee.

CCL.

O PRIMA anni venturi dies, dies “animæ dimidii meæ” natalis, quantæ, Deo favente, felicitatis series a te incipiet! mihi forse “novus sæclorum nascitur ordo;” mihi vero felicitas mea sufficiat. Mais dans l’interim il faut que je m’en arrache : correspondence, however, will remain, that substitute for, and supplement to conversation : and what a supplement! Little does *he* know of the human mind, who does not see the vast importance it is of.

I feel that I owe a further apology to my reader for the intermixture of languages in this book. I do not know whether he will accept as such, that of the superior force with which (at least as it appears to me) an idea may sometimes be expressed in one language more than in another. The insertions

from Lactantius, I think, may well be excused, on account of the great beauty of his language as well as his sentiments.

CCLI.

I THINK there is no doubt that the qualities of the mind may be learned from the form of the features, the countenance, &c. : true it is, that we see discordance enough to justify the “fronti nulla fides :” but this may arise from bad education, habit (that “*second nature*”) &c. ; the original qualities may remain the same, and would have shewn themselves such as the external appearance indicates, had they not been perverted. What reservation then may we not suppose the great Author of Nature to have made, to ground a final decision upon, different from any that we can form in this world? O then, at least let our compassion have its full indulgence

given to it ! which indeed it ought to have, to a greater extent than the distinction implied in the above observation would dictate to us. How finite must be any judgments that we can form !

CCLII.

THERE can be no real pleasure in conversation, without at least some degree of confidence.

CCLIII.

How *expansive* is Love !

CCLIV.

“ O Lord, in thee have I trusted ; let me never be confounded.”

AND may I add—may I *not* add—I trust also, that in this most important

object in my life, more important, perhaps, in its consequences than I can be aware of, I may not be deceived or disappointed. No, I cannot be either; the powers of perception that are given me, nay, the bare use of common sense, assure me that I cannot; and that in this instance too my heart would have been "the convert of my head;" at least that its most enthusiastic impulses will be confirmed by all that my reason can suggest or judge of. Fie, fie then, my friends; cease your remonstrances, calm your suspicions; acknowledge the right of your friend to trust to the conclusions of his own judgment, and to demand your concurrence in them; and prevent at least part of the shame that you must soon feel for having so long withheld it; for either I must have been deficient in doing justice to the arguments on my side, or you must have been, and still are, deaf to all argument or reason whatever.

CCLV.

I HAVE gained her heart (happy man that I am !), her confidence ; let me not abuse it. And shall I not give her mine ? Yes, in the most unlimited degree ; for she is my second self, nay, my better self : she has given me feelings that I knew not before. She thinks, feels, and acts as she ought to do, and she wants nothing but encouragement (and that she has within herself) to make her continue to do so. She is all, in short, that I can wish her to be. O Contento ! O dolce riposo del mio cor ! I am *sure* ; and from whence do I derive my security ? From my heart, my head and my *God*.—Deus in optima dirigat !

CCLVI.

It is always more or less dangerous to act from the impulse of the moment ; but it is less so in some minds than in others, as that impulse will vary according to the peculiar cast of the mind, which will determine its decisions, however sudden they may be.

CCLVII.

For close connection, congeniality of mind is required ; but if lesser ties did not unite us, how loose would the bands of society be ! But I am afraid, reader, that you will say, “ What an inveterate habit of sententiousness has this man acquired ! ” Adieu then, reader.

Exeter, June 23, 1821.

APPENDIX,

To No. 1.

“ Of two eternities amazing Lord,”

Add,

“ The past, ere man’s or angel’s had begun.”

That is, if eternity may be divided into parts, which seem to belong to time; incongruous, however, as the thought may be, it is surely a sublime one.

Having said in the same number, that “ all we know may be fairly said to amount to nothing,” although what I have said elsewhere might be sufficient to guard me against any misconstruction of my meaning, yet I wish here also to defend myself against any imputation

that may be cast upon me, of seeking to countenance that sort of scepticism, which would shelter its unbelief under the false pretence of ignorance. I would be understood then to mean, what I think is expressed by Dr. Ogden in one of his sermons, where he says "that we know the whole of nothing." If this is true, (and who will deny it?) then we may fairly be said to know nothing completely; and the end of all our acquired knowledge must be the sense of our comparative ignorance.— This, however, will leave plenty of room for all the knowledge that our duties, our wants, and our enjoyments require; in short, all the purposes of our existence in this, and our destination for another world. 'This ample stock of knowledge, the bounty of our great Creator has indeed given us, with the power both of using and abusing it, which latter is but too often done, though he has also given us our reason

as a preservative against it, with the proper use of which, and of the information that we have received, and the application of both by the common sense of the rational part of our fellow creatures, we may, with the Divine assistance that has been promised to those who use their best endeavours to do right, think ourselves pretty secure against those errors that are the most dangerous to our welfare. It will therefore be with our eyes open that we run into any serious dangers that may await us : all errors, however, are not equally dangerous ; for an allowance will be made for those that the frailty and weakness of our nature expose us to, and an atonement (and what an atonement !) has been provided for still greater deviations from rectitude, when the commission of them has been sincerely repented of, and the repetition of them stedfastly avoided.

I hope that a candid allowance will also be made for any other disputable passage that may occur in the preceding pages ; that what is said of metaphysics, or of the subtler parts of physics, will be considered with the same candor ; hoping too, as I do, that if the whole of it should not be capable of effecting any good purpose, it may not, at least, be turned to any bad one ; for the fulfilment of which hope, my best trust must be in that Power who sees the “ devices and desires of our hearts,” and who will promote or defeat them as in his wisdom and his justice he shall think fit. To him, therefore, the great Disposer of Events, let me offer up this short prayer : “ May this little work be instrumental in doing some good ; and may I find favor in thy sight, O Lord, for the good that is intended by it ;” for “ I trust in thee, and know in whom I trust.” In such knowledge, both the head and the heart are concerned.—May it be mine !

and may I be allowed to say—"fungar vice cotis," for others and for myself. But, O my God! how shall I thank thee for all the mercies thou hast bestowed upon me? O let me '*muse*' my thanks, for I cannot express them."

Northbrooke, May 2, 1821.

Hora Matutina.

And let me hope, that in whatever hands, and before whatever eyes this little book may fall (and I will not say how far my expectation reaches) the sentiments in it will be regarded as the sincere expressions of one from whom correspondent sentiments may be expected and depended upon.

Love fills all the mind, and engages all the affections of heart.—True, it does so; but let us examine the purest and most refined sensations it excites, and let us see whether they are not allied to something still purer, still higher. Of what feeling is not the human heart capable, when properly regulated!

W

O Religion! as I began, so let me end with thee! for what griefs dost thou not solace, what hopes dost thou not encourage? thy joys can never tire, for they are joys in expectation; thy converse fills all the mind, and employs all its powers, and engages all the affections of the heart: satiate it cannot, for there is still new matter to seize and to dwell upon, and if the powers of our weak and inconstant minds are exhausted by it, they again return to its delightful exercise, when lighter subjects have refreshed and amused them, but in amusing only shewed their own emptiness, and their insufficiency to satisfy the best and dearest wishes of our hearts: no reverse canst thou know, for what change, what loss can that be subject to, which is itself a resource against every other? If we lose a friend, we gain another in heaven; if we lose a joy, nay all our joys, we have infinite in store of a far higher nature—of a nature which

the mind cannot conceive, but which the heart can feel its desire and its capacity for, and its certain hope of, assured as are both our reason and our feelings of that certitude, of which every assurance, every testimony has been given. Let us then embrace, hold fast, and lean upon, the only support that will not sink under us; and let us die as we have lived, with the sure and certain hope that it will be lasting, that it will be eternal; that we shall be blest and “entendered” for ever.

FINIS.

WE live, we move, act, speak and think ; and when all is over, we are remembered for a while, and then, excepting some occasional mention and recollections, we are forgotten : and be it so ; for it is of little moment that the *Creatures* forget, if the *Creator* remembers.

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